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WHISTLER AND OTHERS

FREDERICK WEDMORE

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of Detroit
in memory of her brother
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1894.

ETTALMER

Whistler and Others

Truly yours
Frederick Wedmore

Whistler and Others

By

Frederick Wedmore

In Art, as in Affection, sympathies are involuntary. For all that, sooner or later, they will need to be justified.

London
Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd.
1 Amen Corner
1906

Note

The First, Third, Tenth and Fifteenth Chapters in the present Volume have seen the light already in "The Nineteenth Century"; the Ninth is re-arranged from "The Anglo-Saxon Review"; and the Sixteenth reprinted from "The Magazine of Fine Arts." Thanks are then tendered to Sir James Knowles, Mrs. George Cornwallis West, and Sir George Newnes. Certain of the remarks in other portions of this book were first made in the "Standard."

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Candid Word to the English Reader, by way of Preface

A PREVIOUS *book of my assembled essays—"On Books and Arts"—touched on Pictorial Art, the Stage, and Literature. This one ventures to be altogether about Pictorial Art, with this reservation always: that to my mind no writing about any Art is other than pedantic, academic, or fragmentary—"mémoires pour servir," at the most—if it is not based on vivid, irrepressible interest in the Life we know.*

The general reader, here in England—to whom this candid word is with much esteem addressed—does not care greatly for the writing that he calls "Art Criticism"; and often I agree with him. But his ideas of what Art Criticism is, are apt to be narrow. To two fields he limits it. With him, Art Criticism—all Criticism, indeed—is primarily fault-finding. Secondarily, it may be also,

peradventure, investigation. But the investigation that is held to be creditable—to have conferred distinction—is generally investigation into minor facts: little, disputed points that have the interest of uncertainty and puzzle. The German, perhaps, is responsible for introducing, or for making much of, that order of Criticism which consists of slow or fevered debate, between two or more learned persons seldom endowed with any conspicuous faculty for Writing, as to whether this most second-rate painter or that one did veritably succeed in being the author of this or that most second-rate work.

Masterpieces do not very often require or invite this method of treatment; and I confess that masterpieces seem to me worthiest of study, and likeliest to inspire delight. But this method—this order of Criticism—has, in some measure, "caught on" amongst us, because in England the contribution of an idea is ever less welcome, as it is also ever less easy, than the contribution of a fact.

Another order of investigation exists, nevertheless, although it may not be so well assured of the every-day reader's respect. I speak now of investigation in the sense of an

elucidation of qualities, an analysis of temperament, a presentation, in full light, of a character or an achievement, an aim or a feat. That, in the instinctive opinion of the every-day reader, has not been, and cannot be, any great part of Criticism. It is a something, indeed, scarcely conceived of by him—because it is the Criticism of the creative Writer: the criticism of Coleridge, Baudelaire, Gautier, Zola, Anatole France.

I wonder, Is it too audacious to ask the general reader, who does not love Art Criticism—and, as he conceives it, most rightly does not love it—I wonder, Is it too audacious to ask him, Does he really love Art? Does he imagine that amongst the English Public the love of Art itself—pictorial Art or literary—is actually as widely spread as the habit of talking about it? Is it a force in English Life—a resource to the individual—a city of the mind to which he can retire when buffetted by Fortune, and be assured of safety, and be assured of charm?

If he said, Yes, in answer to that question, I should go so far as to doubt him. I fear that Art—pictorial Art or literary—is something quite outside the average English

person, who—mixing in a certain world at least—nevertheless essays to talk about it; may enjoy to persuade himself that he admires it: especially such Art as happens to be in fashion when he talks; but who, in truth, is out of sympathy with it, absolutely—receives, absorbs it, at no pore of all his skin—its charm a thing apart from him—that keeps its secret—to which he has never access.

Art—which is the invention or re-arrangement of Beauty, by the hand or brain of man—is, in the opinion of the average citizen, an unimportant thing. The average citizen, in giving, in his real mind, to Art of every kind a minor place—a place rather begrudged than willingly conceded—is convinced, I generally observe, of his wisdom in so dealing with it. Instead of suspecting the shallowness of his own nature or training, that allows him such dealing, he congratulates himself upon solidity and depth. He is concerned with "real life," he considers. He is "matter of fact." But when I look around, and see those matters of fact which do really engage his attention, I confess myself not promptly reassured. What are the matters that he thinks important—the

matters on his mind, say, when he has done with his work?

To get an answer to that question, I turn to the newspapers—to the papers especially the plain man reads. Even the newspaper placards. What better source of enlightenment? For the Editor of the plain man's newspaper is above all things a discerner of the plain man's taste—a caterer for it. What he, or his subordinate, puts on the placards, I take as an answer to my question. I did so take it, I recollect, last Summer, with a result not altogether satisfactory.

One would at first have thought differently. For what I read upon the "posters," the first hour of my enquiry, seemed serious, even alarming, and it had made its impression. "A Bad Beginning," one of the authorities announced. What was that? "Critical Position of England," I read, with trepidation, on the placard of another. Then for a while there was suspense and restlessness. "Jackson saves England," was the next announcement, bringing sudden relief—heartfelt thanks to some warrior, or diplomatist, was it, of whom one had never heard? Impossible, of course, to avoid regretting the condition

of things that had required this great man's activity—"Bad Beginning," "Critical Position"; our country in so desperate a case. Impossible, likewise, to check abruptly one's pride, one's joy, one's vast elation of spirit —for "Jackson Saves England."

It was Cricket!

That was a week, it happens, in which the average citizen, had his outlook been quite as wide and as alert as he imagines, would have been concerned with a most vital thing. It was that July week in which—or so at least reflective people had reason to suppose—there lay in the balance Peace and War in Europe. The question of Morocco, the attitude of Germany. Could Germany's demands be listened to? Peace or War? And if War, then the uncertainty of the result. Might it all end in the clock of Civilization being put back five hundred years? Germany? France?

To the man in the street—more or less to the average citizen, more or less to the general reader—that did not apparently matter. All that long summer day his interest was in a wider field. "Jackson saves England."

In presence of this wisdom, I am not inclined to attach any overweening importance to the average citizen's opinions about Art. When I discover that it is my misfortune to differ with him, I confess myself inclined to go in quietude, with no especial heart-searchings, along my own way: to take my own view, I mean, of great artistic personalities and little ones; to be not overtimid in expressing it; to be occasionally even rather indifferent to the degree in which my view is favoured with acceptance. With much of fashionable Art I am in little sympathy; but I have beheld the fall of certain English Præ-Raphaelites, who were fashionable once—may I not behold the fall of some Italian Primitives fashionable to-day? I have seen the genius of Whistler abused or laughed at; and now his poorest work is sought for with the eagerness that should be devoted to the acquisition of his best; and halls that held a jumble of the fine and the inferior have been crowded by gazers who still half-wondered, but were quite determined to admire.

It would be a satisfaction to suppose that as Time passed, as opportunities increased,

there was amongst the large English Public some appreciable progress in tasteful perception and in sincere and personal enjoyment of the things of Art. Honestly, I cannot aver that this satisfaction is mine There is something in our Race that makes it a difficulty to extract either from the admitted bourgeois or the "cultivated" person who has rushed to Siena or the Lombard plains, any judgment upon Art comparable in sagacity or clearness with that of the first artisan you may collar in the first French provincial Museum.

Little can those of us to whom Art is a part of Being, welcome the parrot-like repetition of admiration scholastically gained for some performance whose appeal may be of History or Antiquity, but is not of Beauty at all. Enjoyment, were it genuine, would be displayed much oftener in face of the Art that records something of the full and varied Life we know. It would be given in more generous measure to the fresh and individual vision of the common land and every-day skies, of country and of town, of hill and coast —to the pourtrayal, with the resources of the newer technique, *of the characters, the*

charms, the pleasant faults even, of the people who move us to-day.

But I do not discern in average English folk any encouraging growth of sensitiveness to the vision of these things. Have they their eyes on the real object? Have they their fingers—I sometimes ask myself—on the real pulse?

F. W.

April, 1906.

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Whistler and Others

I

THE PLACE OF WHISTLER

It is now some time since by the death of one who was a man of genius and of profound individuality—the terms are almost synonymous—the world that talks of Art was set to wondering what it was that had been really lost. So different, so opposed, have been the comments of people who have seized a pen, that the wonder, the uncertainty, must have lasted. Who had indeed gone? Was it a Master who had brought a revelation, and who held the key to all truths; a greater painter than Velasquez; the peer, more than the peer, of Rembrandt? Or was it a mannerist, smart merely, merely showy—a painter and etcher sworn to eccentricity, and whom nothing but the sincerity of his shallow opinions saved from the disgrace of the charlatan?

Really, it was neither the one nor the other—but that is a fact which the English public is not greatly to be blamed for not having promptly discerned. Whistler was condemned on the one hand—condemned: nay, often actually ignored—by the fogey of "academic" prejudice, or "scientific" investigation; by the adorer of such beauty as may have had the luck to be consecrated by an existence of at least four hundred years—by the student who persuades himself that the garb of the Antiquary suffices for the pose of the Connoisseur. Whistler was praised—praised without qualification—on the other hand, by sectarian painters steeped in no knowledge, breathing no air but that of the modern studio. Their opinions had no basis; their judgments no justification; they recorded their votes without claim; no franchise was theirs. And everybody who had known Whistler a little, and had an anecdote or two about him, was transformed, in imagination, into his chosen friend; and while recording, with remunerative reverence, quite the most trivial of his words and deeds, these chosen ones would

have us understand that it was they who were responsible for nearly everything serious that the artist had done. Over a closed grave, was there ever before such effusive pushing or pressure? This man had known Whistler, and had served him years ago. Everything that Whistler had done excellently had been done in those years. That man was the boon confidant of later days. Before those days, nothing was known surely—before then, everything was myth. So, egotists disputed; so, Nobodies were advertised. And the true Whistler after all? To be discerned not then: not then to be indicated.

And now the dust is laid; the clamour hushed. It may be possible, now, to form a judgment with justice—to express it with calm.

Even those who have had only a casual acquaintance with the life performance of Whistler must have been struck with the variety of the mediums used by him for its accomplishment. It is almost easier to name those channels of expression he avoided than those that he employed. He did not work in Mezzotint. He

did not work in Line Engraving. The rare, yet occasionally revived practice of Silver-point Drawing he never resorted to. But he painted in Oils ; he painted in Water Colour ; Pastels he made so admirably that he may even be held responsible for "prettily spurring on " some heavier-footed comrades to make them very badly ; dainty was his touch with the Pencil ; with Fantin-Latour he shares the honours of the happy revival of artistic Lithography ; and in the art of Etching, whatever may have been his limitations, his place, by reason of his qualities, is by the side of Rembrandt and Méryon.

What was the cause of Whistler's always enterprising, experimental employment of as many mediums as I have named—each with its own special conditions, its technical difficulties ? Industry was not the cause. For upon the merely industrious Whistler poured out his scorn. Industry may be an " endowment of the duffer." Work must " excuse itself by its quality." Apart from quality, work had for Whistler no virtue. Amusement he understood—laughter—companionableness—indolence even. But

work—mere work—Adam's curse, under the shadow of which it was foolish, if not criminal, for Man to remain. No!

There were in effect two reasons that prompted Whistler to the exercise of mediums so numerous—to the acquisition of the various technical skill those mediums demanded. One of them was his possession of an extraordinarily deep artistic sense of the appropriate and the fitting. So much an artist was he, that hardly once in his long career did he mistake, misuse, the medium in which was to be executed with delight his given, momentary task. Another reason was his enjoyment of change. Pertinacity did not desert him, when pertinacity was wanted. But he loved change. He hated grooves. They were fatal to freshness; fatal to spontaneity. Though he did not invent, he would surely have approved of the dictum, "Failure is to form habits." It was not for nothing that his emblem was the butterfly. The "soul of things," if you like; but at least a soul inconstant, transitory; flitting here, flitting there; and so alive. That he was volatile —in his way almost feminine—counts for

a part of his charm. He had Watteau's sensitiveness, and a lighter wit. Not his—it never could have been his—the soul of Holbein—the unshaken soul of Dürer.

Unless it be thanks only to some half-dozen masterpieces, not as a painter, not as a stern draughtsman of the figure, will Whistler live by the side of the greatest artists on wall surface or canvas, or on the sheet of drawing paper. If to realise with precision either texture or anatomy was not in truth his aim, scarcely more was it his aim—though indeed it was occasionally his achievement—to sound the depths of character. Character was not the thing in life that most interested him. If it had been, Dramatic Painting and Anecdote Painting, with their inevitable approach to some qualities or functions of Literature, would not have annoyed him so much. I am not disparaging for a moment the painting he liked, the painting he practised—I am only trying to define what it was, and what it was not. It had first of all to be Decorative—decorative it succeeded in being. Whatever it represented, it was suffered, tolerated, approved, by himself,

on condition that it was at least an agreeable pattern of colour and line. Nature suggested it ; but it was not bound by Nature. Fact was in it, in abundance—fact most penetratingly seen—but from the fetters of fact its freedom was expressly and constantly declared. The grass was too green, Boucher said to Lancret. And Lancret answered, " Je suis de votre sentiment ; la Nature manque d'harmonie et de séduction." Harmony must be given seductiveness given, Whistler opined and protested ; and his art, sometimes boldly accepting Nature, sometimes exquisitely refines on, and sometimes brilliantly rejects it.

But that is not the attitude of mind of a great painter generally, unless he be a decorative painter, only or mainly : unless he be, for instance, to name artists of different ideals, yet with this one thing in common, a Tintoret, a Veronese, a Pietro da Cortona, a Boucher, a Puvis de Chavannes. Of Whistler, it was constantly the attitude of mind ; and among the very greatest decorative painters of the world he might have been, had he had Tintoret's opulent

palette, or the majesty of Veronese's sweeping draughtsmanship, or the remote, suave, restful dignity of the design of Puvis de Chavannes.

His principle that a pictorial work must before everything be decorative, he applied in different degrees. Frankly and simply decorative he was but on rare occasions—the greatest of them, the opportunity best offered and best seized, being the occasion that presented itself when he had his way with Mr. Leyland's dining-room, and, beginning, I believe, with the modest aim of accommodating a little the work already there to some framed work of his that was to be hung amongst it, wrought gradually, yet with a perfection as complete as if one thought had guided him from the beginning —wrought gradually the " Peacock Room." Much oftener, in cabinet picture, in framed canvas, whether definite and professed portrait, or pleasant grouping of draped models, or vision of the Town or River in grey daylight or in the mystery of night or dawn, his painting, decorative undoubtedly, was a concession—no abandonment of principle, but a compromise that recognised

the rights of Truth and of Fancy. For Fact and Beauty—so often incompatible—he found a *modus vivendi*. Sometimes much effort, much invention, much ingenuity—what he would have called much "science"—was required to make this compromise effective: and there were always required instinct and fine taste. But sometimes of obvious, necessary effort there was very little; Nature herself sang in tune; and so we have such a picture as Mr. Alexander's "Nocturne in Silver and Blue," Mr. McCulloch's "Valparaiso Harbour," or the silvery and brown-grey vision of "London in Ice."

I am not sure that "Nature sang in tune" when she created Thomas Carlyle—or was the fault that of circumstances? Anyhow it is instructive to reflect upon the effort that was needed, that was made, and finely concealed, when Mr. Whistler built up gradually that Carlyle portrait whose pathetic simplicity is the adornment of Glasgow. I hope the Corporation of Glasgow, which had the wisdom to buy the portrait, has had the wisdom to buy also a first drawing for it, that was exhibited

at the Goupil Gallery; so that the contrast may for students be discernible between the Carlyle of the first impression, the Carlyle of obvious fact, the prosaic Carlyle—a "grave liver," indeed, in Wordsworth's phrase, but mainly still the thoughtful peasant—and the Carlyle of the great portrait-painter's poetry, the Carlyle of Whistler's completed vision.

And because I have said already that Character was not the thing in which Whistler was chiefly interested, I am the more anxious to protest that when it did interest him his understanding of it was profound. His portrait of his Mother—lodged happily in the Luxembourg—is a masterpiece of refinement and quietude, of resignation and reverie. When character interested him, it was generally either the naïveté or pretty pensiveness of Youth, or the accumulated experience, the wisdom and the tenderness, of an Age that still stops short of a too visible decay. For the first, see the "Little Rose of Lyme Regis," or the etching of "Fanny Leyland." For the last, see the sprightly elderliness of the "Mère Gérard"—in an etching again—

and the etching of " La Vieille aux Loques," which it is true is the record of a countenance and figure into which the sadness of some incapacity—be it only that of very deep fatigue—has already stolen. " The Master Smith of Lyme Regis "—a brawny being, painted with the full sympathy of any great artist for any excellent craftsman —is an instance of Whistler's rarer but still occasional interest in the character of middle-aged people who, while he paints them, are yet in the stress and in the noonday heat of life. And so again there is the " Sarasate."

Perfect indeed are certain of the performances of Whistler in Painting; and I have mentioned most of these, and in doing so I have not been able to avoid mentioning too, already, two or three of the Etchings—the etchings perfect in so much greater proportion, and perfect in so much greater number. But before I discuss them in even such little detail as is permissible in this essay, another word about the Painting, and a word, too, that is of general application to the range of Whistler's art.

A master not so much of every difficult

problem of draughtsmanship, as of Composition in line and in mass, as of refined and broad expressive brushwork, as of colour, as, above all, of tone, Whistler—in the main original, profoundly—did submit conspicuously, in the course of his life, to two influences—to two, I mean, other than that of Velasquez, which the "Miss Cicely Alexander" most betrays and most brilliantly profits by. He submitted to the influence of Albert Moore, and to that of the art of Japan. It is important that both these influences should be recognised—the second jumps to the surface in the "Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine" and in "The Golden Screen"—it is important also that their limitations should be acknowledged: they did not, in truth, last very long, or extend very far. The various "Symphonies in White"—the more intricate of them especially—betray the influence of Albert Moore; as to whom I have been asked whether indeed it was Whistler who influenced him, or he who influenced Whistler. It was the latter, of course; and that is shown not only in certain of the paintings, but in a good many pastels

—outline drawings of the figure, with a large Classic grace—and that large Classic grace is just asserted, but not so well asserted, in one figure-etching of the Leyland or Early Middle period—the "Model Resting"—and it is asserted again much later and much better, and this in part because the medium is more suited to it, in two or three of the Lithographs.

So much for influences. I have named the chief ones—I do not pretend to have exhausted them. For instance, not only through Albert Moore, and Albert Moore's devotion to the art of Phidias, did the genius of Whistler receive the nourishment of the Classic. "Je prends mon bien où je le trouve," and the Greek Classic directly, and Tanagra perhaps most of all, had their say in the formation and the exercise of the genius of Whistler. Nor—as I have shown already—is it pretended that Velasquez, nor is it conceivable that Rembrandt, passed before the eye of this alert and ever flexible practitioner and had no effect on his practice. Now, however, for the mediums in which, more even than in Paint, was manifested the brilliant vision of Whistler,

and his unfailing *Virtuoso's* skill. These mediums are Etching and Lithography.

And first, and because, thus far, in Critical Writing it has been dwelt upon least, we will turn to his work in Lithography—a medium that Whistler never touched until his Early Middle period, and in which he laboured most largely (or enjoyed himself oftenest) in his later time. What—as its very name implies—what is Lithography but Drawing? It is Drawing that can be duplicated, multiplied—passed on in this way, in essence, to several or even to many possessors—passed on with the intervention of only the thinnest of veils; of *no* veil, practically. As in Etching, each owner of an impression is practically the owner of the original work. The drawing made by the artist upon the stone, or, in more recent days, upon the transfer paper whence the work is to pass to the stone, may not in every case be exactly what it would be if Printing had not to be considered. Printing has, no doubt, to be considered; but out of it the artists in Lithography, the rare men who know Lithography's capacities—Fantin-Latour, or Whistler, or younger

artists, Charles Shannon or Belleroche—can actually wring an advantage ; and (I must almost apologise for saying so) there is the greatest difference in the world, the most essential difference, between Lithography practised as a craft—the print issued roughly for the music-seller—and Lithography practised as an art by those whose is the honour of having best revived a method which had been abased, for the most part, during two generations.

Speaking broadly, it may be said that in Lithography, Whistler—ever alive, as I have urged before, to the limitations of a medium, as well as to its opportunities—dealt with themes less varied than those he dealt with in Etching, and dealt with them far less intricately. The Lithograph has the simplicity of the chalk or washed drawing. It is addressed then, by the expert in its practice, to only such subjects as its simplicity suits. But even here there are differences ; and I admit that the other illustrious or brilliant Moderns whom I have mentioned—Fantin, Shannon, Belleroche—have sometimes carried Lithography to a complexity of expression and statement

To give an instance, I have seen an Early State of "The Smith of the Rue du Dragon," bare, naked, incomplete—the central darkness of the actual doorway too much unconnected with any tone on the wall; and I have seen a later State with that relation established, with no crudity anywhere—with that effect realised which the master had intended, or which he saw was the finest. He had worked in the interval. And so, with a care of detail consummate, but with an impulse ever fresh, an impulse one and indivisible, were wrought and issued, in most limited numbers, such little marvels of original Lithography as the "Little Nude Model Reading," the "Dancing Girl," the slightly draped model standing against a balustrade, the slightly draped model seated with legs apart, the "Pantheon," the "Steps of the Luxembourg," the "Smith's Yard, Lyme Regis," with its two horses seen from behind—a drawing of horses which not even Stubbs, not even James Ward, could have beaten.

The care bestowed on the completion and the printing of the Lithographs has now

been indicated. It has long been matter of history that a like care was given always to the Etchings. Always, when opportunity allowed. Whistler is not responsible for the grey, cold printing of the Thames set of Etchings, through Ellis and White, nor for the heavier subsequent printing of Goulding. He is responsible only for the Early Proofs of those Thames Etchings. In Paris, for the first impressions of the French Set, Delâtre of course served him well and very well was printed by Goulding the Second State of the "Marchande de Moutarde" —of which the First had been done perfectly abroad—but as a rule it is to Whistler's own printing that we must have recourse if we are to see his Etchings quite at their best—the *fine fleur* of his quite exquisite Art, and the *dessus du panier*.

For Whistler printed most differently each plate; sometimes most differently each separate impression. He painted on the plate as much as printed on it. Take an impression of one of the "Venice" set, printed by the time that dexterous little labours had perfected the copper, and at the time that Whistler

himself knew best how to print it. That impression—free from the faults that provoked a certain measure of criticism and disapproval from those of us who were on the whole only too desirous to applaud and admire—represents the plate perfectly. The "Little Venice," say. Here scarcely a line has been added; but the plate "prints" and the plate began by *not* printing; and Whistler by this time has called into requisition the resources of ink—the plate is painted with ink: it is wiped exactly where wiping adds to the effect of it; and so we have, as no one else could have given it to us, "Little Venice" in its perfection. Just as much, of course, in the Set of Twenty-six Etchings, the "San Biagio," and that marvellous piece, "The Garden," or, to give instances from later work, the fascinating Amsterdam Canal scene, "Pierrot," the singularly spirited sketch of the Tour St. Antoine at Loches, or the pleasant jumble of "Southampton Docks"—a brilliant little plate in the set that was done to commemorate the Great Queen's first Jubilee.

Whistler, who wrought about a hundred

and fifty Lithographs, wrought in all something like four hundred Etchings. Some few have not as yet been catalogued, notwithstanding the existence in America—thanks to the scrupulous care of Mr. E. G. Kennedy and Mr. Howard Mansfield—of a Supplement to the Second Edition of the *Study and Catalogue* which is mine. He etched from 1857, more or less for forty years. And the work, even more abundant than Rembrandt's, has at least Rembrandt's variety of theme and of method. It has much more than Méryon's variety, and it is many times as abundant—reckoning by the number of plates, I mean—as the work of that sombre and splendid genius. To contribute a little to the fixing of Whistler's place, it behoves us to pass in review—not lengthily indeed—this Etched Work; to say something as to its periods, something as to its characteristics.

The familiar Three Periods—a number as customary as the "three courses" generally open to the Gladstonian politician—may here with advantage be extended to Four. In my thought I group, for convenience,

Whistler's etched work as belonging to the Early, to the Early-middle, to the Late-Middle, or to the Late Period. To the first of these times belong the so-called "French Set," and that popular, that for once both admirable and popular, "Thames Set," which, until Messrs. Obach's brilliant exhibition of two or three Autumns ago, represented, for most people who were not special students, the highwater mark of Whistler's achievement. It was the Set they knew and cared about. It was, as I have just indicated, an admirable performance, and it was a performance the world was ready to receive.

To that Early Period, to that first time, belong then these two Sets: the second with its infinitely interesting "Pool," "Thames Police," "Thames Warehouses," and "Black Lion Wharf"; the first with its "Vieille aux Loques," its "Marchande de Moutarde," and a few allied pieces scarcely, to the seeing eye, less attractive—the exquisite little still-life piece, "The Wine Glass," for instance; a performance in which, for once, and for once only, Whistler with a plate as notable as the

" Damier " of Rembrandt or the " Muffs " of Hollar, tried to rival, and succeeded in rivalling, the achievement, in Painting, of De Heym.

The Early Middle is very much what has been known as the " Leyland " period—thanks to the artist's close association with the Leyland family, at that time. Many of the pieces are dry-points. They aim above all things at breadth—breadth, and it may be atmosphere. Rightly was Dry-point employed. The portrait prints of all the Leylands belong to this period. To this time belongs the extreme, the perhaps even exaggerated simplicity of the " London Bridge," and the tranquil amplitude of " The Large Pool," and " Price's Candle Works " in its early and rare condition. To this time belongs the beautiful sketch, the " Girl on a Couch," and that " Model Resting " which represented, and did justice to, the suave " line " of an approved young beauty of the day.

A link between the Early Middle and the Late Middle period—its actual date, if I remember, was 1879—is furnished by one of only two or three largish, yet not very

large, etchings which Whistler ever executed : and that is the " Battersea Bridge " —the old plank-bridge then already doomed. It is, in a fine impression, a masterpiece of masterpieces, and attractive, somehow, to the world. That plate was immediately succeeded by the Venetian prints, of which there were three groups : first, the twelve prints, the " Venice " of the Fine Art Society ; pieces which, when first shown, were, though admirable as conceptions, not really in their perfect condition (and hence, between Whistler and his critics, reproaches and " these tears ") ; next, the " Twenty-six Etchings " of the Dowdeswells (all but five of which were of Venetian themes) ; and last, a few very little seen plates, such as the broad dry-point " Stables " (stables for gondolas). In the best known and most favourite plates of this period there is sometimes—in " Little Venice " particularly —a quite magical economy of means : but also there is sometimes an intricacy the particular subject demanded ; no elaboration for elaboration's sake, but a tireless dwelling on beauties that multiply—that are but gradually revealed—in " The Garden "

for instance: only a little walled garden that abuts on a Venetian canal: it is an exquisite vision of the irrepressible piercing of the life of the Summer.

In the latest Period of all, came, amongst other things, a few Dutch subjects, now rightly much in request by the collector. In the best of them—unless it may be in the "Zaandam," which shares the marvellous economy of "Little Venice"—elaboration was carried far. In "Pierrot, Amsterdam," there is every constituent of a picture. And it is on the principle of a painting, surely, that "Nocturne: Dance House" is done. Piece by piece, almost, the effect of that plate might be transferred to the covered canvas—the canvas would be found used fully to the very corners. Seen from the dark canal—Amsterdam again, this time—lights quiver in the windows: quick movement is suggested. Seen from the shadowed ways and murky waters, the Dance House throbs with life. Work of this kind seems a development of, but is likewise to some extent a departure from, the method pursued in those of the Venetian etchings which tend also towards elaboration. Anyhow, almost

simultaneously with it, Whistler, with splendid elasticity of mood, and never-failing flexibility of hand, was minded to execute not a few plates which have the small scale and the learned slightness of the best pieces of the Jubilee group of three or four years earlier, such as "Southampton Docks" and "Return to Tilbury." "Tour St. Antoine, Loches," "Market-Place, Loches," and in Paris the vivacious vision called "Passages de l'Opéra"—the scene is really on the Boulevard, and includes the arched entrance to the Passages—are excellent examples of the power of taking rapidly, or at least taking slightly and suggestively, picturesque notes of faultless grace and unobtrusive power. The ignorant person thinks such work would bear extension, at many points. But each part in reality is in quite perfect relation to the other, and, to work so planned and executed, addition could only be damage.

With those few, then, who have triumphed brilliantly in many fields—and whose inspired labour, initiating, experimenting, pursued with assiduity, has never ceased to be joy—Whistler comes to be

classed, by men who would do him justice, and who perceive the measure of his influence, and the degree of his own personal advance from the standpoints reached before him. I have read that his imitators fail; but that is the fate of imitators generally—the influence of Whistler, and the appreciation of him by the qualified, is not to be taken stock of by counting who those are that paint most obviously in his fashion, and declare themselves his pupils. Further much than these, his influence has extended; and with most of the best in Modern Art—with the impressions of Constable, with late Turner water colours, with Alfred Stevens's Genre-pictures, with the pregnant memoranda of Keene, with Orchardson's elegance, Fantin's quiet grace, Courbet's massiveness, the "actuality" of Manet and Degas—his Art will be found to be in sympathy. I could try to express roughly, in a single sentence, the part his Etching has played—the particular part played by his work in Colour, ever at least harmonious, and charged too, as regards his figure subjects, with his own special revelation of Character, through pose,

instead of through feature—the part his draughtsmanship has played in the Lithograph—but it would be forcing the note. And, moreover, something of this—unless I have failed entirely—I have already made plain.

A last line chronicles, however, the fact that more to Whistler than to anyone who has worked with brush or needle do we owe that complete acceptance of Modern Life, of the modern world, of all that is miscalled its ugliness, of its aspects of every day, which complete acceptance, remember, whether in Pictorial Art or the Art that is Literature, is the most salient characteristic of the best workers of our time. Whistler, with a nature essentially aristocratic—knowing well, in the depths of his being, that Art of any kind and the "man in the street" have nothing in common: that what is called the "plain man" and Art are for ever divided—yet accepted the very things that seem most commonplace to commonplace people, and showed us their interest. So great an artist—the fantastic beauty of Venice and the scaffolding for the "Savoy" appealed to

him together. The dome of the Pantheon, the Renaissance towers of Loches, a Cubitt-built house in Pimlico, the Candle Works over the River—they were all his material. Understanding each, with each he knew how to deal. And that is one of the reasons why the Portrait of his Mother will go a few years hence in safety to the Louvre—why "San Biagio," "The Garden," and "The Kitchen" lie unabashed for ever by the side of the noblest Rembrandts—lie by the "Lutma" and the "Clement de Jonghe," lie by "The Landscape with an Obelisk" and by "The Goldweigher's Field."

II

VENETIAN PAINTING

THOUGH the course of Venetian Art, from the days of its beginning to those of its greatest, who were not its latest masters, is scarcely a long one, it is long enough to allow us to witness the transfer of a painter's ideal from the realm of Religious to that of Secular Painting. Giovanni Bellini—as many of his pictures make evident, and as is illustrated in possibly the most exquisite of forms by one picture in the Church of the Redentore—when he painted religious themes, painted them with scarcely less than the unction of a Fra Angelico, or the refined sweetness of a Perugino, a Van Dyck, a Memling. But by the time that Tintoret was splashing the walls of a palace with luxurious colour and energetic form—when Titian, in his robust old age, was chronicling

the sumptuous beauty of the mistresses of Princes, and Veronese discovering in the record of a miracle the opportunity for setting forth the splendours of a more than regal feast—the claims of the spiritual life, at least, were felt to be no longer dominant, and, for good or for evil, what is called "the Renaissance" was fully accomplished.

An Exhibition, in which Venetian Art is seen in mass, in which it is to be estimated in the gross rather than by the single example, is the best occasion that can be afforded for marking this transition—this modification, at the least—of feeling and practice. It is important, at the same time, not to exaggerate the fact that it suggests. What is to be noted in this respect, in passing from a Cima da Conegliano, say, to a Titian or a Tintoret, is not that the one believed and the other disbelieved in the reality of the sacred subject upon which he happened to be engaged, but that the sacred subject got to be painted with a less entire devotedness, and, yet more, with the employment of every device of luxury and external splendour. Hence the Madonna and the

Holy Child yielded to the presentation of the Marriage at Cana and of Christ in the House of Levi. The true Venetian's choice was in some measure the choice of Demas—"having loved this present world"—but it assumed the form neither of crude revolt nor of vulgar denial—it was chiefly that the great Venetian was impressed so overpoweringly with the fact of carnal, or at all events material, magnificence, that it came naturally to him (when he was not concerned with Portraiture or Classic Allegory) to select such a Religious Subject as afforded room for the introduction of distinguished architecture and seductive flesh, for a grouping of humanity courtly and visibly refined, and for a pose of stately and robust grace.

Attention may be directed to a composition which is, so to put it, a summary of Venetian feeling and Venetian aim: that masterpiece of Veronese, "Christ in the House of Levi," to which allusion has already been made. It was accurately enough described, in the London Exhibition in which it appeared, as a "replica with variations"—on a smaller scale, for

instance, and with features not existing in the other work—of a great picture which is one of the glories of the Accademia at Venice, and which is in some sense a companion to the "Marriage at Cana" of the Louvre. Nothing could be more perfect in accomplishment; and, of the given theme, there could scarcely, I suppose, be a more dignified conception or a more adequate exposition. The humble festival about which Martha was so anxious in the house of Lazarus would hardly have tempted Veronese's brush. He would be attracted only by a vision of those houses where Christ was grandly entertained. Levi's or Matthew's—he was a sort of "Receiver-General"—like Simon the Leper's, was presumably such.

So Veronese has represented it—the feast spread out of doors, under an arcade that does not roof out and exclude a Venetian sky; a long, narrow table, with Christ in the centre of it; a terrace-like foreground, peopled with Venetian senators and a Venetian populace; and all this expressed with an art that never ceases to be dignified and decorative, even

when it records the detail of a gesture or is occupied with the realisation of the texture of a garment or the crimson of a *baldachino* lifted above some chair of State. The story is believed in; it is told, and told lucidly and sincerely; but for Veronese it could hardly have found embodiment unsupported by the material glories which fascinated him so much—by the splendour of the Venetian presence and the radiance of the Adriatic light.

III

FANTIN AND BOUDIN

I

THE two most considerable painters of whom, within the last few years, Death has deprived France, have been—if we put aside Puvis de Chavannes, with his noble and tranquil vision of the elder world—Eugène Boudin and Henri Fantin-Latour. Practically they were contemporaries. Boudin was born in 1824; Fantin in 1837. Boudin died in 1898; Fantin in 1904. And each, although, or perhaps because, their themes and their achievements were so different, esteemed the other and the other's work. "*Tous mes compliments. Enfin!*" wrote Fantin to Boudin, when, in 1883, the "painter of the Channel" was at length "medalled." And, in the Spring of 1904, in Paris, when, in an hour's talk, that I hoped then might often be

repeated, Fantin spoke to me of Boudin, it was of his modesty, as well, of course, as of his merit. There is nothing inappropriate in studying for a while these artists together.

II

One side of Fantin's art—his exquisite Flower Painting—we, in England, were the first to appreciate. Let us boast where we may. The best of the Criticism of thirty years ago discerned and did justice to the charm of those astonishing, so brilliant, and yet so placid canvases, on which, in very truth, the rose blossoms and the zinnia has lasting life. Most of the finest Flower-pieces Fantin was ever to paint had already then been painted. From 1865 to 1875—or the end of the 'Seventies it may be—is the great time for his Flowers. It was the best of them that English Criticism had then the chance, and did not then neglect the chance, of appreciating. But in England Fantin's reputation was helped not only by Criticism. The interesting etcher, Edwin Edwards, and his wife—greatly *répandus* in the artistic world of that time—alert, enthusiastic, as well as influential—

were, one or other of them, during long years—first one and then the other, to be absolutely accurate—of infinite service to his name. One or two of the dealers, too, "pushed him" with intelligence; and in England, as a Flower painter, Fantin's place has long been secure.

But there are other sides of his art which the Public here has not had equal opportunities of understanding. Not that opportunities have been wanting altogether. Comparatively lately, Mr. Richard Gutekunst and Mr. van Wisselingh have made brave shows of Fantin's Lithographs; and in his Lithographs only once has Fantin treated a Flower subject. It is a rare piece, and an interesting piece, but not a wholly satisfactory one—a large lithograph of Roses. I take it Fantin promptly recognised that Lithography was not the medium for Flowers, and that on that account the experiment—quite as successful as it could hope to be—was never repeated.

Fantin's other lithographs, the mass of his lithographs—most of them admirable altogether—deal exclusively with the

Figure. The figure draped, or the figure nude; the figure of the little *bourgeoise,* the figure of Eve, the figure as it was suggested to Fantin by the musical romances of Wagner or Berlioz; but in any case the Figure. These things, then, have been seen lately—I may say more of them by-and-bye—but, speaking broadly, looking back over what is now a generation, allowing for certain exceptions, opportunities have been wanting, here in England, of seeing anything but the Flower pictures. Sometimes, indeed—but it has been very seldom, and chiefly in quite minor examples—we have seen in England the Portraiture; and the Portraiture, like the Ideal Subjects in Painting and in Lithography, is a side of Fantin's art that it behoves us to know.

But before we glance at that, and at his treatment of the Figure, whether in Painting or Lithography, and before we try to assign to him his place in the Art by which this country best knows him, let us think of the man himself—a man of the South, who had little of Southern temperament; a man typically French, withal; yet the exponent of that side of French character

which finds itself content—in a life *recueilli*, in a life *enfermé* almost, and at the most uneventful—with a more than English domesticity. Give him his brushes at least; give him his wife, his sister; Music; Books that he may be read to—and a very passion of domesticity was Fantin's. "*Je vais nul part*," he said to me, in the last April of his life, excusing himself *àpropos* of what I learnt had been Whistler's mild reproaches to him, in that he had failed to pay a visit to that illustrious settler. In the Rue des Saints Pères once, and then again in the Rue du Bac, lived some time the genius of Etching. Fantin lived in a quarter that at least abutted upon that one—he lived in the Rue des Beaux Arts. But the distance was great for a visit. Fantin, I believe, had made a *bonne promenade* if he had taken the air a little on that light Bridge that spans the Seine hard by—the windy Pont des Arts.

I said to M. Durand-Ruel, quite lately —to the hale veteran who must have known him from youth—that Fantin had not looked his age, and had not in any way

seemed it. "*Il sortait peu*," said M. Durand-Ruel, significantly, in full explanation of a death every lover of Fine Art must mourn; and I recalled a greyness in the visage not quite in accord with the vivacity of the clear and light-blue eye. "*Il sortait peu*"—and everything had been said. It reminded me of another and more active vice of Age, that the excellent Henry Vaughan—himself then all but ninety years old—signalled to me as in his opinion the most certain precursor of Death. "He has taken to driving in a brougham," Henry Vaughan remarked, of a common acquaintance. "He has taken to driving in a brougham." The end was near.

But it is of Fantin's life, and his work in it—not of his death, nor of the likelihood of its approach—that I am writing; and—a last word upon the gloomier matter—Death was at least averted for awhile, there is no doubt, by the delightful painter's long Summer sojourning at Buré in the Eure. There, in his own corner of pastoral France—his corner by adoption, I mean—in the direction of La Beauce, which is France's granary, Fantin had the air about him,

the quiet air of the *belle saison*, and, within his sight, roses and dahlias—zinnias, too, in the September days.

Fantin's birthplace was Stendhal's birthplace—Grenoble. His father was a painter, and gave the boy his first lessons. But when to Paris came Fantin, in what was only just young manhood, it was in the studio of Lecoq de Boisbaudran that he received what people speak of as "training." Training, of course, has never made a Master. It has opened, however, some possibilities of mastery; and that Paris studio, in 1857, brought the painter into connection not only with men whose names are to-day forgotten, but with people of genius, who have survived. Of these, the two most conspicuous are Whistler, named already, and Alphonse Legros—in other words, the sybarite of Art and Art's most typical ascetic. And with both, because of real intellectual range, Fantin had sympathy. All three are, in one's sentiment and thought, curiously bound together, not only by a possession of qualities sterling, austere, and delicate (and austerity in Art could be Whistler's as much

as it could be any other's), but likewise because one feels of them, especially, that fashionable or unfashionable, liked or not liked, it is in the very air, somehow, that they outlast our day. Fantin outlasts our day, not less than either of his comrades. In 1859 he was refused in Paris, as Whistler very soon was refused, or ignored, in London.

The austerity of Fantin was shown in nothing more than in his Portraiture. He painted intellect and he painted temperament; he painted Age and Youth; but the Age must have taken on nothing of artificial—the Youth must have nothing of self-assertiveness; not much even of expansiveness, nothing of smartness—it is the youth of the refined *Bourgeoisie*, restricted and content, that knows not the manners of the Quartier du Parc Monceau, nor the manners of the great old Faubourg. So it is that his men of brains—and the men he paints are men of talent, with hardly an exception—are painted, not showing themselves to the world, but at ease with comrades, or, in their pursuits, quietly busy. So it is

that his young women—his *Brodeuses* and *Liseuses*—have nothing of Sargent or Helleu. Their nerves possess stability; and they do not represent in the least the elegance of the Capital, or the mode of the moment. In painting them, if Fantin thought of the traditions of any predecessor, it must have been of the best traditions of Metsu and Terburg, and the best traditions of Chardin.

To turn again to Fantin's pictures of men, two of the most famous of his portrait groups are "Un Atelier aux Batignolles" and "Hommage à Delacroix." In the first, Fantin recorded, with the quiet harmony that is most characteristic of him—for he is colourist essentially, as well as harmonist, only, I think, in his Flower-pieces—the men (half of them destined to be famous before his life closed) with whom his life almost began. There, in the "Atelier of the Batignolles," were Zola and Edouard Manet. Other people—some of them perhaps famous already—were, later, dragged into the "Hommage à Delacroix." Why do I write "dragged"? Because I recollect that on my saying to Fantin there seemed

no special reason why these should all do homage at that particular shrine, he smilingly allowed that half of them were there not at all because they wished to be. Be it his to assume their acquiescence, and to lead their worship in the direction in which just then he thought it fitting that it should go.

It is in the Allegorical figures, the draped figures of Romantic Music, in the Classical nudities, above all—amongst which I count perforce the firm and silvery figure of "Eve" in the lithograph—that the correctness—the warm correctness—of Fantin's draughtsmanship, still more, the suavity and splendour of his design—becomes most of all apparent. I have used the word "austere" of him; but there is no austerity whatever about his representation—his habitual representation—of the female figure. Here, with Legros, he has scarcely anything in common. In his drawing of the female Nude, he is of the tradition of Venice, modified by the tradition of Parma and the simpler grace of Prud'hon. As far as Painting is concerned, I like these subjects best in the earlier years of his

treatment of them. It is then that their colour is finest—nothing blurred, nothing modified unduly—and the very touch of the brush is then more interesting. As far as the Lithographs are concerned, Time changed him hardly at all—if it did change him at all, it was for the better. *Pace* the French feeling of the moment, which inclines, even more strongly, to other things, Fantin's greatest achievement was his painting of Flowers. He is, *par excellence*, the Flower-painter in Oils, as Francis James is the Flower-painter in Water Colour. But next, I suppose, comes the perfection of draughtsmanship, design, and craftsman's technical skill, in the production of the Lithographs. Whistler's, Legros's, Shannon's, Belleroche's Lithographs are the only ones that can endure at all—at least in any number—to be set by Fantin's. That one fact let us note—it must by no means escape us—ere we say one word more of the thing that, above all others, was final and consummate—the Flower Painting.

Rightly, of late years, Fantin hardly touched Flower Painting. He had done, in his great period—in the 'Seventies, chiefly,

but not exclusively, as has been said already —those things in Flower Painting by which he is most certain to live. In a sense, his Flower Painting is itself Portraiture—that is, the individuality of the particular bloom is in no way passed over. Fantin—like Francis James—arrests for us its soul, where Van Huysum and Van Aelst—great in verisimilitude and great in symmetry—arrest for us mainly its magnificence and its material life. With Fantin, there is the sentiment as well as the fact—the intimate pleasure not only in the thing's splendour, but in the thing's existence. Van Huysum's flowers were for the taste, ordered and artificial, of the Eighteenth Century—its earlier half. Fantin's were for the taste of the poet of the "Lesser Celandine," and of the "primrose by the river's brim."

A background wholly lacking in incident or line—without even variety of light and shade, for the most part—but a background always carefully and subtly in harmony with the flowers themselves, is his flowers' only *décor*. So much have they that accuracy of draughtsmanship which is *la probité de l'art*, that less of subtlety in the background

—less of subtlety, too, sheer subtlety, in the rendering of the main theme—and the things might be botanical studies. Yet they are that, in fact, not more at all than the splendid impromptus of Diaz or the revelries of Vollon. No, no, it is not a mere Realist ; it is an Idealist who has painted them. They have been not only a conscientious student's adequate material. Dahlias and roses ; zinnias ; roses ; then roses and white heather ; stocks, and roses —it is their lover who has painted them. Fantin has understood and valued the fragile life that only his love could prolong.

III

Really, Eugène Boudin must have had a wonderful constitution. Nothing jerry-built about him. Like "Sarah"—once supposed to have no staying power—he was made, truly, of steel. The penury of his earlier years—of manhood, I mean—the immense struggle of all his middle life—neither the one nor the other shortened visibly his days. He survived those evil times. He died at seventy-four.

All that accounts for his large and various

productiveness; it accounts for the fact that some of his work, and some that is not the least excellent, must be referred to a period only old men can remember—the period of the early 'Sixties—and for the fact, too, that some of his work belongs to a time which even young men allow to be recent. Boudin painted at Antibes and at Beaulieu in the Winter of 1896. Nor did he fail to change in accordance with the years: the impulse, a natural one, coming from within, and never from without. So it was, and under those conditions only, that he was "*dans le mouvement*" entirely—even "*du dernier bâteau*," one would say. And Boudin is now on his way to be a Classic; yet were it not for a quite recent Exhibition, preceded by some humble writings of my own, there would even now be but about a score of people in England to whom his name could be said to be familiar.

Since, from seeing one striking oil sketch of his, in M. Jacobi's window, then in the Rue Bourdaloue, over against the portico of Nôtre-Dame de Lorette—since, from seeing that sketch of towering sails, golden and grey, in a placid harbour, I

began to take serious interest in Eugène Boudin, I have often asked myself why we have known him so little. Certainly an English dealer here and there has had his work, and has presumably sold it ; but with us it has never, until lately, been concentrated, seen in any quantity, or made a theme of Criticism ; and it has sometimes seemed, amongst us, neither quite entertainingly new nor quite respectably old. It is of the generation that followed that of the Romantics ; and the Romantics, the "men of 1830"—Corot and Rousseau, Diaz and Dupré—held the field, and Boudin, whom the last of the Romantics admired, has stood alone.

Again, though Boudin's work has great and various virtues, though it is sterling entirely, and so spontaneous that one never wearies of it, it has no peculiarity. Boudin does not break suddenly and visibly away, as Corot does, at a particular moment, from the recognised road—painting never the forms of things, but only their suggestiveness ; painting a few things ; painting these with reiteration—the dreamy, undulating land, the silver of the morning, the mist of

twilight. That is Corot's way. And one of the reasons why he has impressed—though he was late in impressing—the big Public, is that pertinaciously and not as I suppose with any inward satiety he went on doing practically one thing—I mean that it is one order of sentiment that dominates in Corot, that makes itself felt, that by mere repetition gets itself accepted. Such work, by its mass and similarity, maintaining all the time a high though very far from an unbroken level, ends by imposing on the Public no obligation of alertness, no exertion, no need to meet the painter half way. You know a Corot, or an imitation of Corot, as you know the palm of your hand; and the Public loves that facility; and Boudin, with his variety, with the endlessness of the impressions he records, offers it no pleasure so idle and so ready to hand. More or less you must know his work—more or less, too, you must have studied his themes—to understand his individuality. He is a *virtuoso*, but much more than a *virtuoso*—he appeals to the most tasteful of judges. Baudelaire—sanest of critics, if least wholesome of poets—forty years ago,

jumps to the recognition of him. Corot acclaims him "*le roi des ciels.*" Courbet declares "*Il n'y a que vous qui connaissez le ciel.*" And much of the best modern Criticism of France echoes in effect that eulogy.

A word about his circumstances and his life, before I try to analyse with some degree of detail his achievement, and speak of the mediums as well as of the themes in which Boudin's art is expressed.

Eugène Boudin was the son of a sailor: the sea was in his blood. Born at Honfleur, the quaint and interesting, but now somewhat decaying port, on the western side of the estuary of the Seine—the port whose ancient picturesqueness Isabey romantically chronicled, in a picture whose effect is preserved for us through the impressive mezzotint of Lucas—he was himself, like more than one of the sea novelists, his true brethren, a while "before the mast." His father was at that time pilot on board the humble packet that daily crossed, in serene Summer and stormy Autumn, the breadth of Channel water that divides Honfleur from Le Hâvre. Eugène,

in his boyhood, had wider experiences. Once, at least, his ship dropped anchor in an English port; and M. Gustave Cahen's authoritative, though rather scanty, Life of him records that he was once at the Antilles. These early voyages gave him impressions, gave him actual knowledge, gave him insight. I do not minimise their importance. All his youthful ways did something to equip him for the business of his life. But the vitality of his work, during long years, is due, of course, not only and not mainly to those first experiences with which so many painters are wont to be content—its sustained excellence is due to Boudin's habit of daily and of hourly contact with the scenes that gave him occasion for those subjects on which his choice instinctively fell.

Before old age came on him, Boudin's father retired from the sea. He settled then at Le Hâvre—established himself there as a small stationer and frame-maker—kept Eugène Boudin with him as an assistant, and the instinct for drawing showed itself in Eugène as a youth. "Chance," says M. Cahen—to whose book

as well as to some talk with Boudin's brother, M. Louis Boudin, I am indebted for details of Boudin's early days—" chance brought into the shop the painter Troyon, who gave him some pastels to be stretched and framed." The sight of them was a stimulus. Young Boudin did a landscape which came under the notice of Millet—Millet, poor but a Master. His heart was set already upon being an artist: nothing else. Millet reasoned with him to no purpose—reasoned from his own bitter experience—but helped him, gave him his first lesson, as well. The shop, thenceforth, was as a closed book to him. Troyon, Isabey, and Coûture, recognising the young man's talent, busied themselves with getting the town of his adoption to grant him for a few years an allowance. The object was, that he should have leisure to study. And, towards 1850, a three years' pension from the municipality of Le Hâvre was forthcoming; and to Paris, to study, and observe, went Eugène Boudin.

Not, however, as it seemed at first, and seemed even for some time afterwards,

very usefully. He was confused in his course. Rousseau "solicited" him this way—the word is Boudin's own—Corot "solicited" him in that. And, at a bad moment for Portraiture to succeed—for, amongst people who could afford but little, the daguerreotype was then found fascinating and sufficient—he made the mistake of taking to Portraiture. Nobody wanted his portraits. The time for the pension expired. "The town of Hâvre owed me nothing," says Boudin; and, "It had been deceived."

Then began the really difficult days that must have seemed to be endless ones. In spite of occasional recognition of a success that was personal, they lasted more or less till the beginning of his old age—till within ten years of his death. Then only was his income a good one; in the years of what is now accounted his best labour, his earnings, not always actually insignificant—and his ways were humble ways—were at least strangely uncertain. In several years that followed pretty closely upon those in which Le Hâvre had pensioned him, Boudin must have starved if he had not been useful to

Troyon. Many a Troyon background—the sky, or more than the sky—owes something of its life to Boudin. Troyon had a name and was busy, and Boudin helped him effectively, where he needed help the most. But, by that time, Boudin's work, wrought on his own panels, was his own entirely, in character. He had learnt his lessons. He had taken his road. But the Public would not receive him. "*La Peinture grise n'était guère goutée à ce moment-là*," he says: "*surtout pour la marine*." And it was the grey of the Channel waters, and the grey of the Channel skies, that Boudin had found, by this time, it was his business to set down. How wide, really, was his range, how unremitting his originality and freshness, in that which, looked at superficially, may seem to be limited, I shall insist on—I shall try to show—a little later, when I have done with the brief story of Boudin's outward life.

In one of the years that followed not long after the ending of the pension, Boudin went to Brittany. He returned there later; but it must have been in the first of his long sojourns in a land that lies beyond the

boundaries of the veritable France, that he met the Breton girl whom, in 1858, he married—using her that very year as his principal model for what seemed then an "important" but must be looked at now as on the whole an unsatisfactory picture, the "Pardon de Sainte Anne la Palud, Finisterre." The town of Hâvre, not even then quite weary of well-doing so far as he was concerned, bought the canvas. It hangs in the Museum. In after years Boudin was ashamed of it—wished it had never been painted; wished it had been destroyed—in its hard and laboured finish it misrepresented the artist he had become. But, at the time, no doubt the purchase pleased him. Like his wife's modest dowry—destined certainly to be spent—it helped to keep the couple going for a while. It was in somewhat later days than these, and when he was himself more truly, that his straits were the greatest. The development of his genius came then apace, and on the part of the Public there was no response. Yet at this time, more distinctly than in the beginning, a few artistic men believed in him.

Frequent then was his practice of Pastel ; and it was when he was settled in humble fashion at Honfleur, or on the hillside above it, in 1859—when the character of the Pastel work, done for his own sake entirely, was in advance of that of the Painting, done in part for the rare buyer—that Baudelaire was smitten with the charm of these impromptus, with their suggestiveness, so free and so potent that for the seeing eye it is a realisation, absolutely. And why may I not quote here, instead of later, those phrases of Baudelaire's which have almost the colour, almost the vivacity, almost the depth, of the intense and personal visions—those pastels they describe ? He is speaking of skies. "*Ténèbres chaotiques, immensités vertes et roses . . . ces fournaises béantes, ces firmaments de satin noir ou violet . . . ces horizons en deuil, ou ruisselant de métal fondu ; toutes ces profondeurs, toutes ces splendeurs, me montèrent au cerveau.*"

Two painters with whom, in years still relatively early, Boudin became associated, must be named here. To mention them—Jongkind and Claude Monet—is to show in

part Boudin's derivation, and to show in part his influence. Jongkind—a Dutchman, chiefly of French practice—was Isabey's pupil ; but his originality was such that he departed wholly and at once from Isabey's often theatrical manner. The marines of Isabey—save at his very best—have something that is artificial, too obviously. The marines of Jongkind are scenes observed with closeness, and suggested with power. Whether in Painting or in Etching, Jongkind's touch has knowledge, economy, strength. Boudin, up to a certain point, was influenced by him ; though he had qualities—the quality of colourist was one of them—Jongkind never possessed. He became a little hopeful as to his own Future—as to the eventual acceptance of his work—when, as he says, he saw the Public disposed at last to swallow " that fruit of Jongkind's, of which the rind was certainly hard." Jongkind, by learned vividness, by learned omission—an art of omission sometimes even overdone—set the way to Impressionism. And Boudin, looked at in one light at least, appears a link between the orthodox of the

earlier half of the Nineteenth Century and the Impressionist of the latter half—he was the master of Claude Monet—and it is the Impressionists and those who understand Impressionists—it is, at all events, the Moderns—who comprehend best, and value most, the work of Boudin. For Monet, Boudin was a fascination from the first; and M. Hugues le Roux prettily chronicles the meeting of the man and the boy. "*Aimes-tu la peinture? Regardes*," says Boudin. And the chronicler explains: "They were in a light key"—for the period, revolutionary—all those landscapes of the port and of the Lower Seine. "*C'est très beau*." And they were friends immediately. And master and pupil marched off together —"*s'asseoir dans le grand vent des plateaux*."

A few years later, Claude Monet—already in Paris or its neighbourhood—laboriously urged Boudin to establish himself in the capital. But means were lacking, and perhaps, too, the desire. Afterwards Boudin wrote, not altogether regretfully—not with much self-reproach; for he knew that in Art, at least, his ways had been justified—"*Je suis un isolé, un rêvasseur, qui s'est*

trop complu à rester dans son coin et à regarder le ciel." But he had his Exhibitions; humble at first; then more visibly important—Durand-Ruel, a picture lover *d'avant garde*, and some of the younger of the dealers, too, were believing in him. Alexandre Dumas—the second of the name, of course—bought two of his things, and wrote to him, at a later time, imploring him for a third. What he asked for was "a great sky, a line of sea, and on that sea one boat."

Yet when Boudin found purchasers his terms were low; the period of the War and of the Commune (1870-71) saw him in dire straits; and he who had been at Trouville, painting in poverty, Summer after Summer, not only the landscape but the people of the *Plage* (they are amongst the most vivacious of his sketches), passed over to Belgium, and so to Dordrecht, and set down with a power not less than Jacob Maris's, and always his own, the towns and towers and long canals of the Low Countries.

Returning to France, in the very fullest possession of his means—living still from hand to mouth, and sustained only by the

strength of his delight in Nature and in the ever-opening vistas of his art—Boudin was in the North mainly, where was that "*paysage de mer*" (Courbet's phrase) of which the ships he knew so well, and drew so skilfully, were but the incidents and, so to say, the figures. But once, at least, in the middle of the 'Seventies—in the middle of his greatest years, that is, for his greatest years were not those of his largest canvases—Boudin was at Bordeaux. And the "Port de Bordeaux," which represents him at the Luxembourg—and which is large by exception—is in every way one of the most considerable of the pictures devoted to the aspects of ports. It is a comprehensive and elaborate record of the town and its pursuits: it is a vision and a history. But it has not, and it cannot have, the charm of impressions less complex, more vivid, and more personal—those smaller pieces in which it is now the outer port of Hâvre, or now the harbour front of Dieppe or of Trouville, or now the quay of Fécamp, that is brought actually before us, with its characteristic shipping, and its tidal waters, and its background of Channel skies.

These smaller pictures, when they went to the Salons, were almost lost there; yet in '87 "Etaples; marée basse," of modest proportions, perfectly composed, and with such spirited figures (but Boudin's groups, whether of figures or of cattle, were good always), is recognised as a "*morceau de choix, morceau accompli, symphonie des gris des plus délicats.*" The succeeding year the painter had an Exhibition on the Boulevard de la Madeleine, followed by a sale at the Hôtel des Ventes. Sixty Pictures, thirty Pastels, ten Water-colours. The result, scarcely £400.

One year later, he lost his wife. He was childless, I believe. But companions he had, of either sex. In the Winter, Paris was now his home. And—as to his affairs—by an irony of circumstance, the tide turned.

But time began to tell on him. In his latest years, he went to Venice, and health compelled him, and money then allowed him, to winter in the South. He painted Venice ably—but it was not his field. Boudin had true visions of the French Riviera —of the "Côte d'Azur"—but he did not

exhaust its charm, and did not, perhaps, seize the most characteristic of its features.

Already an incidental reference has implied or mentioned the mediums in which Boudin worked; but Boudin used these mediums with such unfailing appropriateness, and he transferred himself from one to another with such freedom, that they and the themes he treated in them must be discussed a little less superficially. As regards scale, he had the good sense to confine Pastel and Water-colour—and, one need hardly add, Pencil-work—to the size that exhibits best, and justifies most, the means he was at the moment employing. In these mediums he did nothing large in size: the largeness was in his style, rather. In Oil, the best work of his middle period—the work by which for the most part he lives—is, with but very few exceptions, of more or less modest scale. The masterpieces that show best the finely conceived breadth of his noblest time—that are veritable lyrics of weather—measure sometimes twelve inches by nine; sometimes twenty inches by fifteen, or thereabouts. When he goes much beyond this, he is apt to be a little

empty, or, less frequently, a little laboured —anyhow a little less personal. His treatment of his themes, with the art at his command, with all his learning and dexterity, has no need for wandering into vastness. The precision of his earlier work —I am not speaking of his earliest—has its own charm : it is a precision not devoid of breadth. But I prefer to that—and I prefer even to the looser largeness of his latest time—the strangely expressive breadth of his middle period—from 1865 to 1880, as near as may be, marks that period's limits —when, with delicate, decisive hand, he was pouring out accumulated stores. Then it was that his realism was most fearless : then it was that it was most essentially poetic.

Water-colour, Boudin used generally for more or less brief notes : sometimes extraordinarily pregnant ; but rarely exhausting —never *pretending* to exhaust—the possibilities of his theme. His Trouville crowds, or Trouville groups, of the later 'Sixties— before the reign of crinoline was quite passed—have, as far as our eyes are concerned (and our prejudices into the

bargain), some obvious difficulties to contend with. They surmount them—they win us to their side. Admirably these notes record the aspect of the beach on a September morning: the cool, clear light, an hour before breakfast-time: the attitudes, the very gossip, of Parisians *en villégiature.* But when Boudin wills that the people shall become of secondary importance—when the pageant of sunset is his motive instead, or, seen from the Jetty perhaps, the ominous marshalling of cloud above grey cloud—he turns to Pastel, and by that medium, sumptuous and summary, the effect is rendered—the end before him attained. Again, no one has understood better than Boudin—not even Prout of old, or Fulleylove in our own day—no one has understood better than Boudin the extraordinary expressiveness of the Lead Pencil. He has employed it chiefly for notes—sometimes for complete little drawings—of Shipping. A fishing boat, it may be, in the quiet corner and refuge of the port; or with its sails catching the sunlight, as in brisk and pleasant weather it makes for the sea. Or, perhaps, in a larger harbour, and

alongside of some spacious quay, two or three *trois-mâts*—their rigging against clear sky—are moored in stately line. The earlier pencil drawings, exact and scrupulous in chronicle, are pencil. In the later ones—in which the record of effects is compassed, as much as the record of form—it has occurred to Boudin that four learned dabs of Indian ink will help the chiaro-'scuro—will give emphasis and strength to what, for all its economy of means and all its speed, is really a little picture.

"Where, apart from the galleries of such Parisian dealers as Durand-Ruel, Allard, Georges Bernheim, Gérard, and such private houses as that of M. Gustave Cahen in Paris, and that of M. Van der Velde at Hâvre, may Boudins be seen in any number?" The question is a fair one. The Luxembourg has put away, for the moment, all but the "Port of Bordeaux." Well—apart from these places—the most interesting spots in which to see them are Hâvre and Honfleur. Hâvre especially; for there, within sight of the Museum windows, lies so much that Boudin painted—within sight of the

Museum windows, ride the boats, and roll the waters, and forms and re-forms itself the changeful sky which were the very theme and inspiration of Boudin's art.

The large Brittany picture, in the Hâvre Museum, the "Pardon de Sainte Anne la Palud"—I have mentioned it already—is sufficiently pale and inexpressive in colour: sufficiently tame in touch. But that is a piece of 1858—only it is worth noting that, early though it is, Boudin had given before it much promise, not in it fulfilled. He had given it in considerably earlier pieces: quiet little bits as they are; one, a Fort apparently, and the *terrain vague* that lies near it; another of the same fort, it would seem, seen differently—with a glimpse of water beyond. And they are dated "1852"—the year after the town of Hâvre pensioned Boudin. A picture of the Giudecca, with the Ducal Palace, comes near the end of his career, and represents that work at Venice which for the artist was neither a great failure nor a brilliant success. It is nearly three feet long; and by it, and of much the same dimensions, are two interesting visions of the Channel; one,

indeed, very slight and sketchy—a record of tossed seas and breezy sky—the other the *jetée du Hâvre*, swept over by tempestuous waters; the lighthouse at the jetty's end standing out, white and steadfast, against a sky that is one vast sheet of greyish lead. And, not to speak of innumerable Sky studies, now turquoise and now leaden, now orange, rose, or saffron, and studies of Hâvre fishing-boats and rich-hued cattle in fat meadows by the Toucques, there is particularly to be noticed, in that Museum of Le Hâvre, a splendid vision of an illuminated shore and hillside beyond a dark foreground and a shadowed river; and again, a study of a row of seated people with bathing huts to right and a sky of grey, with rose in it: an *ébauche* if you will, but full of tone, and from the very first a picture. These Studies and their like—two hundred in number—form the generous, lavish gift of M. Louis Boudin to the town that helped his brother's first steps.

In the Museum at Honfleur—looking out almost on Boudin's Bust, by the shore—are a few vivid oil sketches, good and interesting enough in themselves; but they

at all events do not quite equal the best of the many at Le Hâvre. They were obtained for Honfleur through the instrumentality of M. Louveau, I believe. And it is sketches—but sketches in all mediums: Oil and Pastel and Pencil and Water-colour (though chiefly of a period before 1870)—that are possessed, in a quaint, delightful house, of the Rue Eugène Boudin, by M. Louveau himself—Boudin's friend: the friend who closed Boudin's eyes; who keeps religiously, in a chamber shown to few, Boudin's palettes, his easel, and, on the easel, the last sketch he made.

He left that sketch unfinished. It is a sea sunset: orange, shot with red. And in its glory, as in Boudin's own glory when he did it, there is no hint of melancholy, but that which belongs to the end of a day—and to the end of the day of a man.

IV

RICHARD WILSON

THE Winter Show of the old Masters in 1892 fitly opened with an unquestioned masterpiece by an artist whose work combines in singular measure the attributes of grace and learning, a sense of Style and a Sense of poetry, with the most accurate and scientific and craftsmanlike of labour. For students of the English School I have already named the painter—I have named, of course, Richard Wilson. Mr. Wentworth Beaumont's picture, "Apollo and the Seasons," belongs, it would seem, to almost the latest period in which this long-neglected master of Classic design practised his art. It is probable that it is a canvas contributed to the Royal Academy, under the same name as that under which it now figures, in 1779—three years after Richard Wilson, failing to make both ends meet, with decent comfort, by the sale of his

pictures, had been appointed Librarian to the institution of which, as a painter, he—though it was little realised then—was destined to be one of the most abiding ornaments.

It does not follow, however, that Richard Wilson—who, when he abode in a mean lodging out of Tottenham Court Road, thought himself happy to receive fifteen guineas for an admirable instance of his art—actually laboured on Mr. Beaumont's canvas within a few months of his exhibiting it; for long before that time disappointment had instructed him in the best fashion of accepting the verdict of his day, and he may not have forced upon the public what the public was not ready to receive. In any case, "Apollo and the Seasons" is a late picture, as well as a fine one, and it is pleasant to reflect that if, a little before its exhibition, the painter had accepted a post which a popular and busy man would scarcely crave, a little afterwards his inheritance of a small private fortune freed him from difficulties, and he went back to finish his days calmly in his own romantic land.

V

GOYA

To make the differences between the old and the new in Spanish Art most apparent, we have, in our examination of it, to jump from the one to the other. The transition seems less abrupt if we follow the historical sequence, and, between the great men of the Renaissance and clever modern people, place a man—who was a genius—neither old nor new: Francis Goya. Yet, in truth, for all Goya's boldness and variety, his affinity was with the old—with Velasquez at all events—more than with the modern. His figures had immense activity; his groups, great movement; but his Art no restlessness. A seeming Revolutionary at one moment, he ends by taking rank as a Classic.

Never has there been seen in England anything approaching the representation of

him made one year at the Guildhall. It was not, and it could not be, perfect: Madrid and Seville hold too many of Goya's finest pieces. But at the Guildhall they did much.

Goya had a long life. Born near Saragossa in 1746—about the time when Hogarth was painting "The Lady's Last Stake"—he died at Bordeaux, in 1828, when the genius of Constable was mature. Although himself a "Romantic" to the last degree, he was the personal friend of Louis David. There is work of his—the portrait of "Dr. Payrel": it must be a late piece—which shows him akin to Gainsborough in elegance, in power of character drawing, and in the very scheme of colour or method of brushwork. His "Bulls"—a piece belonging to Mr. W. M'Kay—is at the same time pictorial and dramatic—nothing more convincing, more vivid. Some of the more famous of his work in black and white—for Goya was etcher, aquatinter, and a master of Lithography, as well as painter—is occupied with the same theme. We were indebted to the Marques de Casa-Torres for the loan of "The Maypole." As Goya

conceives it, the Maypole is a sort of *mât de cocagne*. People do not dance round it: they climb up it, instead. An eager crowd moves and watches; and behind and away from them, a great white house upon a barren hillside rises brilliant against an indigo and steel-blue sky. This is the work not only of a master of dramatic movement, but of an adept at *chiaro 'scuro*, and of a colourist.

Goya attracts me less in his portrait of the Duchess of Benavente. It shows pretty effects of colour, and a skilful handling; but the model had, it would seem, but little attraction, either of spirit or form. Yet this was one of the women of whom Goya was most enamoured. The fancy had already passed, perhaps—or was at least passing—when the painter applied his hands to this canvas. It may be that by that time his affections—for he was a creature of uncontrolled impulse—were already transferred to that Duchess of Alba whose "subtle personality," as Mr. Rotherstein properly calls it, is to be traced in many scenes of "The Caprices," and whose portrait is presented with quite amazing

frankness—without one touch of reticence, naked and unashamed—in the famous and beautiful "Maja" of the Academy of San Fernando.

VI

THE RISE OF ENGLISH WATER-COLOUR

In Water-colour Painting, England is generally accounted so supreme that we sometimes think there has been water-colour nowhere but here, and that we invented as well as surpassed. That is a mistake, however. The invention of Water-colour does not belong to us—nor as France has long shown, does its only excellent practice. There are rare drawings by Dürer washed in water-colour ; Rembrandt occasionally used water-colour ; and it was used much oftener, and with a success more obviously complete by other Dutchmen, who were Rembrandt's contemporaries.

Ostade was the chief of these others. Ostade, when we forget his sentiments and forgive the hideousness of his types, stands in our memory as a perfect craftsman, a

prince of *technique*. I suppose no one who ever worked in Art, succeeded more habitually than Ostade in doing precisely what he wanted to do, and in doing nothing else. He pourtrayed with refinement a gross life, and attractively executed a repulsive theme. A master of Oil-painting, a master of Etching—one who in that Art long threw his gifted contemporary, Bega, unduly into the shade—he became in his old age, at a time when even genius is wont to wax dull, and the accustomed track is more welcome to most men than the dangerous experiment, a master of Water-colour. His Water-colour was no thing of careful outline lightly washed; it was full Water-colour, complete, with every effect realised.

The English School, one would have thought, might have derived from Ostade or his fellows, but it seems that it had another origin. English taste, during many years of the Eighteenth Century, leant to the study of Topography rather than of Art. Or is "study" too dignified a word? Hardly perhaps in so far as the research was prompted by antiquarian zeal, and not by vanity alone. At all events, such research

into the history of the ancient monument hard by, and such pardonable pride in the new "seat" which was to be famous over all a country-side, led to the execution now of single designs, and now of whole series of designs, which were destined generally to be engraved. Accuracy was above all things wanted in these designs, and the demand for them encouraged, I suppose, a school of correct draughtsmen, of whom the younger and the more independent sought — well — to be colourists we can hardly say, but sought at least to become acquainted with colour. Thus the drawing, at first perhaps chiefly outline, then accurate outline timidly washed, gained "local colour," suggested rather than realised—a little blue in the sky, thin greenish colour and brown for the foliage, a darker brown, low in the drawing, for foreground and earth. And this was done with an enforced and obligatory moderation, easily to be distinguished from the willing reserve of strength; done with a touch full of convention, and constantly repeated, and cramped in its effects—the touch of the prudent beginners upon whom there has not as yet fallen the

blessing of the freedom of Art. These men made ready the way. From Sandby's time the art was a little more visible in the craftsmanship; the distance a little greater that separated the newer skill from the neat handicraft; the artistic feeling rose as the capabilities of the method were gradually revealed to the men who practised it. Then came Marlow, Malton, Wheatley, and John Cozens, and then Girtin, Turner, and the complete emancipation.

Of these few men whose names have just been mentioned, Marlow and Malton were of the topographical and antiquarian school. Malton was the son of an earlier Malton, who had written a *Treatise on Perspective in Theory and Practice.* He was himself the author of the *Picturesque Tour through London,* and it is recorded of him that he taught perspective to the youth who was one day to be the acknowledged chief in English Art. He was born in 1748. Marlow had been born eight years earlier, and was a pupil of Samuel Scott, one of the few excellent painters among the companions of Hogarth. Marlow was not only a pupil, but a follower;

devoting himself very much to the record of the town, and uniting accuracy to picturesque effect. "A View of Saint Paul's from Ludgate Hill," was shown as from his brush at the great Water-colour Exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, in 1871, and Mr. Henderson, the owner of that drawing, owned at the time another not less accurate and real, and perhaps more poetical than this. It was of "Fish Street Hill."

But for what would generally be considered the poetic side of the newer school, we must get at least to Wheatley or to Cozens. I do not name them as equals. Both were men of rapidly-roused emotions: men alike perhaps only in their intense susceptibility. Wheatley, when very young, and with imagination inflamed by stage-sights and tavern-talk, conceived himself violently in love with the wife of the most famous dancing-master of his time; and with her he eloped to Dublin, in days when elopements were fashionable and Dublin beyond reach. It was an episode, and not a main theme—other business was in store for him. He returned to town—

abandoning not only Ireland, but Bohemia —and the fatted calf was forthcoming. He married a placid and a graceful woman, who was also an agreeable artist; he painted, with approval, a ceiling at Lord Melbourne's; Alderman Boydell employed him in the illustration of Shakespeare; he produced his picturesque figures of "The Cries of London"; and when he died, at fifty-four, he had been eleven years a member of the Royal Academy. He deserves to be remembered, though his sentiment was often sentimentality, and his beauty prettiness. For he made, sometimes exquisitely, delicate studies of rustic figures in woodland or at cottage door. He idealised at all events frankly; even exaggerating Gainsborough's manner of bestowing on the rural life a grace hardly its own. Knowing nothing of the strength and greatness of Nature, he could yet suggest her peace, in his slighter drawings, in which the Ophelias and Mirandas of a beatified peasantry wander over a gentle hillside or down the road through the coppice.

Cozens was a poet of a sterner sort, and the dignity of his art owed something to

that of his environment. He made it his business to pourtray Italy, and it was always classic Italy—Italy seen on that stately side which painters have been wont to select—an Italy that displays nothing familiar or of every day, but wears a robe, it may be of ceremony, certainly of severity and of reserve. Perhaps there is only one artist, and he is modern and contemporary—I mean Costa—who has seen Italy as a more homely land, in such a way as Browning has seen and has described it in *An Englishman in Italy*—as a land where the daily life of humble men has as certainly to be led as in the Beauce or in Lincolnshire, and where many a landscape, that is not stately at all, justifies the dull task or the trivial diversion of the hour. For Cozens that Italy did not exist, any more than for Claude or for Wilson; but Cozens, like Wilson, found at all events in the Italy of Classic association, an Italy that was not theatrical—that retained a tranquil gravity in stateliness and a simplicity in grandeur. Cozens, if he was limited in theme, was as limited in range of hue—even the sombre green of the cypress, rising against the sky,

had hardly its true local colour with him—but a profound and genuine sentiment inspired his work. It was sometimes grand, and it was often melancholy. It was the work he was born for.

Cozens had but one note ; or, if we prefer it, he composed but for one instrument. For Turner, were all the resources of the modern orchestra. Turner made light of difficulties and banished restraints—he had his will with his art. Technically he belonged both to the modern and to the ancient *régime* ; that is, as regards the medium, he painted in pure water-colour and he employed body-colour, as he chose ; and, as regards range of hue, he was in his youth the most reserved and in his age the most audacious of men.

Turner must have been a stripling—he can never have seen Italy and the Alps—when he executed certain drawings, of a greyish blue, varied only by greyish brown, which were found, and had indeed been previously known, in the wonderful collection of Mr. Sackville Bale. These drawings must have been happy inventions, suggested, possibly, by prints. There was

in them, for all their timid and limited colour, the very spirit of the enchanted land that he foresaw. Already the master of faultless draughtsmanship laid out on paper the bend of the lake shore and the flat marsh-land where the lake is fed by the river, and the earlier course of the gathering stream among the upland pastures and the roots of the hills. Already the art of Composition, in which, with Wilson, Varley, and George Barret, the age was great, held back from him no secret. The secrets were Turner's own. He had passed quickly from the stage at which Composition is not employed, to that at which it is not only employed but concealed. And a complete subtlety of shadow and light, a luminousness in shadow, a continual variety obtained by tints just broken, were evidenced in these drawings.

Not long after Turner executed these works so delicate and broad, of which only the true amateur fully perceives the beauty, he and Girtin were engaged together in enlarging the resources and varying the methods of their art. The blue-grey drawings—lightly washed—of

Chiavenna, Como, and the Italian slopes of the dividing Alps—were no evidence of such enlargement and variety. In their means, they were old-fashioned and conservative—what they revealed was a new and more poetic vision of the world, and the presence in our art of a new genius who would revolutionise where he did not modify, and would complete where he did not overthrow. Girtin was Turner's companion in labour—to some extent his companion in life—during a few years. Then Girtin died ; his work having in some respects surpassed all that had been done in Water-colour up to the moment of his death. The earlier and simpler drawings of Varley—done soon after Girtin was in his grave—are perhaps all that can be compared with it. Turner himself admitted its excellence with cordiality—it is told of him that when a connoisseur, more plain-spoken than polite, declared to the great Turner that in his hackney-coach, now at the door, there was a drawing " finer than any of yours," the great Turner, after the first moment of irritation, replied to his visitor, " Well then, if it is finer than

any of mine, I can tell you what drawing is in your hackney-coach. It is Tom Girtin's 'White House at Chelsea.'"

But the period of Turner's mature life—especially, say, the nearly thirty years from the beginning of the *Liber Studiorum* to the issue of Rogers's *Poems* in 1834—was a time when the advance in Water-Colour was not really dependent upon him. He was in the front, but he was not alone. The best of Cotman's massive and glowing work in water-colour was done during the *Liber Studiorum* time. His vision of colour, during all that time, was ample, and it was sane. His draughtsmanship was certain, and it was economical of labour. He could deal vigorously with effects of weather and wind. That, in fine—and hardly a later period—was the time at which he was doing the work which won the praise of Turner, and that active interest which caused Turner, years later, when the question was referred to him as to who should be elected to the "professorship" of Drawing in a London public school, to say, somewhat testily, "Elect Cotman, elect Cotman—I tell you again, elect Cotman!"

The best work of Dewint was done during the middle life of Turner, and it was work not more dependent than Cotman's upon the study and practice of the yet greater master. Dewint's best world—the world of the English lowlands—he saw in his own way. His handling was as simple as was his theme. A characteristic of Girtin's—the low tone of his drawings—is a characteristic also of Dewint's. The keenness of his vision and the directness of his transcript ensured him unity of effect. He was among the last of the great sketchers, and little concerned with intricacy of composition.

Dewint sketched to perfection in his younger manhood. Looking at his work a good deal, and always sympathetically, I have never had cause to see that his sketches improved, as time passed. There is sometimes difficulty with them, however; for as he held, and rightly held, the opinion, that "they were signed all over," he never signed them superfluously in the corner, and consequently never dated them. But there are changes in their manner, or rather, as time went on, the change is possibly

this—that the earlier sketches, on which his fame should greatly rest, gave way too much to drawings done as lessons for pupils, always in the pupils' presence, and sometimes with Nature more imagined than seen, and the master occupied but little with his theme and content to display in chief the manly and admirable method which years had consecrated. As long as Dewint's sketches last they must be prized most highly. Pure water-colour has nothing better to show: it has nothing simpler, broader, more solid, more suggestive.

David Cox's sketches—pure water-colour likewise—are of an effectiveness that is immediately recognised. They are obviously vigorous; but he would be audacious who should say that the best of them were therefore less refined. The shorthand of Art has seldom been more completely expressive than it has been in them, so that the name of David Cox—like that of Thomas Collier, who succeeded to his traditions and improved on them—may be mentioned with the great names already uttered. But David Cox's genius

came to him in his old age; it took him half a century of work to make that sketch of "Stokesay Castle"* which he executed in a single morning; it was "by dint of labour"—previous labour—that he threw off drawings in which there was no trace of labour at all. The changes in David Cox's art are perhaps not in themselves more marked than those in the art of many another painter who has lived through a long life and a period of progress; but it is remarkable that they show him not only another man but a greater man at sixty-five than at forty.

* The *Stokesay Castle* which Mr. Levy, I think, bought at the Stone-Ellis sale. It was rightly held by Mr. Ellis to be the finest of all the sketches that had come to him from the artist, his friend.

VII

ROMNEY AND LAWRENCE

ROMNEY was never a penetrating interpreter of human character, and in Miss Kitty Calcraft, whose pleasant pertness he recorded picturesquely, there were, it is more than probable, no depths to fathom. Often that was quite otherwise, but here the painter was sufficient for his theme. One little canvas, however, shown in the same room, one year at the Old Master's—a canvas less highly wrought; it may almost be said "unfinished"—is more characteristic, not only in its breadth of touch and in its scheme of colour, but in the apparent ease and readiness of its grace. This is the portrait of Romney's most inspiring model, a half-length of Lady Hamilton with uplifted arms, reading a Gazette. Its simplicity of beauty dwells with us, and from the artist who produced

it we need ask scarcely more. Great it may not be, but in its light vein it is charming, and like all that Romney gives us, it is without offence.

The English portrait painter who succeeded Romney in winning the suffrages of the fair and the great, had against him something more than the disadvantage of practising in a period of tasteless attire. To Sir Thomas Lawrence there were denied the finer gifts of the colourist, and the controlling judgment which preserved Romney's grace and Reynold's dignity. Whether compared with these men, or measured on his own merits, Lawrence is apt to seem vulgar. And looked at after the distinction of Gainsborough, he is revealed as meretricious.

VIII

RAEBURN AND ZOFFANY

THE quality of Poetry and of Style of which Romney, with his occasional lapses and final breakdown, had, after all, so much, is wanting to Raeburn, whom Scottish patriotism or clannishness sets generally in a higher place. It may be that Raeburn never, at his worst, became so incompetent or "cheap" as the gifted but too sensitive painter over whom Lady Hamilton cast a spell. Raeburn, at his worst, was dull and harsh, rather than actually feeble; but does his best compare—at all events, does it compare in attractiveness—with Romney's finest performance? Yet he is admirably sterling. Eighty years have passed since the Scottish portrait painter of Edinburgh's great period touched his last canvas, and the studio in York Place was closed. Long before that, Sir Henry

Raeburn had set down, with his accustomed firmness, in a portrait now belonging to Lady Burdett-Coutts, the features and expression, the blond colouring, the balanced yet imaginative head of the master of Scottish Romance. So sober and certain is the handiwork, so complete the chronicle of character, that the picture deserves study. In this case Nature fortunately endowed the painter with a great human subject, and one that he had brains enough to understand, and dexterity enough to depict. Nothing is here wanting—the charm that was before him very clearly was the charm Raeburn was able to convey.

Zoffany—to go back a little from the first quarter of the Nineteenth to the third quarter of the Eighteenth Century—was accustomed to see the subjects of his portraiture in a manner that strikes the spectator as more imaginative than Raeburn's; but that is in part because his portraiture most frequently dealt with theatrical people, of a native or an acquired mobility of expression, and dealt with most of them as they were perceived in the simulated excitement of

a dramatic performance. His pictures cannot all vie in vividness and power of illusion with his famous "Garrick as Abel Drugger"; but many represent, with as much of naturalness as the record of the scene demands, an actor playing a part. The works are interesting by their measure of vividness, and also, as Hogarth would himself have made them, by their pleasant and observant realisation of the interiors they profess to depict. Attention to the "still-life" of a subject, to the form, and hue, and light and shade of furniture and accessories, denotes a lesson learnt thoroughly from the most skilled Dutchmen of a preceding time; and, as the landscape painters of our Eastern counties—those especially who were least imaginative, and who counted least upon the value of elegance and formal grace—learnt much from Hobbema and Wynants, so did the Genre and portrait painters of perhaps one generation before them, profit by the serene and ordered art with which Metsu disposed an interior, and De Hooch or Ostade governed for their ends the flush of colour and the accident of light.

IX

RUSKIN

SOME people have said, since Ruskin's death, "He was not a great Critic." There is an inexactness in their thought. Ruskin was a very great critic, though he was not a perfect one. He spotted weak places, and he exposed them fearlessly; and to do that —though not to do it as your principal business—is one of the conditions of the criticism that is great. The honeyed utterance, the suave and genial vision, perform but half of the task. Again, the capacity of Ruskin is attested by the illumination he shed upon much noble work he was the first to appreciate. It is easy to say, in regard to any particular genius in Pictorial Art, in Sculpture, in Poetry, or in Prose Fiction, and to his advocate—whoever that may be—in Criticism, "Oh, if So-and-So had never written, that man

would have been appreciated all the same!" Would he? Not quite "the same;" although in time he would doubtless have been valued.

And further, in support of the assertion that Ruskin was no great critic, it has been said to me—it has been said in the street—that if you asked painters whether he was a critic of Painting, they would say "No: he was perhaps a critic of Architecture"; and if you asked architects whether he was a critic of Architecture, they would say "No: but perhaps he was a critic of Painting." But one does not ask painters, charged of necessity with the prejudices of the particular studio—the School in which they learnt, or the School they have founded—one does not put to them, but rather to men of the world, detached, instructed and impartial, the suggested query. It is much the same with architects—except that their art, like surgery, involves a more special knowledge. But, even accepting for the moment what finally one rejects—the craftsman's pretension to be the judge without appeal, as to who is the real critic of his particular craft—I have

had to reply, "The painter may not say, perhaps, that Ruskin knew much about Painting. The architect may not say he knew much about Architecture. I waive the point, for the moment. But you will not find the Writer who shall tell you that Ruskin knew little about Writing." A great master in Literature—that he is, in any case; although in Criticism he had extraordinary limitations, and absolutely feminine perversities.

As to the subjects in the exposition of which Ruskin exercised, or could exercise, his mastery, it may be that for the genius he was—for the thinker, the poet, the artist in Writing—they were, for all their apparent range, in truth somewhat bounded. Had there not been beautiful Painting of the kind he could understand, and noble Architecture, and yet more, a lovely and ever-varied world of Nature it was his delight to study and expound—and upon which it was his especial function, in the phrase of Browning, to "put colour, poetising"—Ruskin would have been without his material; his ingenuity in his own craft unstimulated, his very impulse absent

and withdrawn. For, many of the themes, much of the material that engages habitually the artist in Literature, were not material for Ruskin. And what I dare to call the richest fields of the imaginative writer, it was not for him to till. He loved outward incident, romantic adventure—witness his appreciation of Scott—but there is no reason to suppose that he could ever have created what he admired. Indeed, actual creation—whether of incident or character—was not his gift at all. A few poems, and "The King of the Golden River"—an allegory graceful perhaps, but hardly remarkable—and there, with his youth still upon him, was an end of the work that even *endeavoured* to be creative.

And then, again, allegory, outward incident, romantic adventure—not one of them, surely, is the "richest field," I spoke about. That "richest field" of the imaginative writer, is human character, human emotion. And what indication is there that with subtlety, in the complex, necessary way, Ruskin understood that? To understand that, requires four things—Reading, Observation, Intuition, Life. When Ruskin laid

aside creative work altogether, what time had he had for Observation and Life? Of Reading—the least important of the things that I have named—he had about as much as have most educated people. About as much; no more. Of Intuition—the Divine, the spiritual gift, which yet of itself comes partly of experience, or comes never fully without it—of dramatic Intuition, of the sense of how, in a given crisis, this man, that woman, would behave—of all that, had he even a trace? We have no reason to think it.

Well then, the class of theme was limited—and I have said what it was—which presented itself to Ruskin as material on which could be exercised his mastery of his art of expression. That being allowed, of the capacity of what instrument in the whole great orchestra of literary effect, was he, one wonders, ignorant? For myself, I remember none. The instrument of irony he commanded as completely as the instrument of tenderness. He could be playful; he could be indignant; he could be properly bitter. He could be sweet and honeyed indeed; his paths could drop fatness.

Beauty, force, intricate ornament, splendid directness—they were all alike his.

One wonders—any worker in his particular art of Writing has reason to wonder and ask—Was this mastery obtained with ease, or reached for with difficulty? In the act of writing—apart from the time involved, in lowest computation, for the quickest production of so many volumes, so many million words—was there a burning of the midnight oil, a tearing of himself to pieces, a prolonged and obstinate, fatiguing wrestle with the difficulties of his appointed task? At times of course there must have been. But when one remembers how great is the bulk of Ruskin's productions, and that a working life not short indeed, but not unusually long—for three-and-twenty saw about the beginning of it, and three-and-sixty saw what we may call its close—was vouchsafed to the artist, and furthermore, that he travelled much, drew much, and very carefully, studied monuments *in situ*, from England to Italy, one must come to the conclusion that on the whole the work was done rapidly, done easily, done without detrimental effort,

except the effort involved (and serious enough indeed !) by its mere bulk and mass. Besides, in reading it—in reading especially the very early volumes and the very late ones—fluency, actual fluency, a thing so different from the not less admirable sense of ease that in others is achieved laboriously, seems its characteristic.

I have spoken of the particular fluency of quite early works and quite late ones. Each had its own character. The first—of which the first volumes of "Modern Painters" afford the best example—had the exuberance of youth; youth fanciful and fertile, irrepressible, comparatively unreflecting. The second—in which one would name the best things in "Fors Clavigera" and "Preterita"—had something of the garrulousness of age; but not that alone; the garrulousness had not gone far enough to be a fault; in it there was something of the pure ease of experience; it was liquid and flowing; the style was far less constantly ornamental; it was better in so far as there was measure and restraint in the ornament; but I do not know that one can say of it, as a whole, that the

work had gained in balance—in literary balance—in perfection of proportions. And as regards mental balance—well! it had fads, along with ripeness. But it was exquisitely personal—of impeccable candour, and of limpid simplicity.

The charm of the later writing—so different both from the exuberance of the earlier, and the measured strength and gravity of some of the early-middle period (in the "Seven Lamps" for instance)—was, so far at least as I can tell and remember, the charm of the later man; the man approaching old age; claiming some of its privileges; exercising its rights of unfettered affection towards the persons and objects it chose; chiding, encouraging; asking to be forgiven much, and much indulged—asking to be accepted implicitly.

Only twice did I see Ruskin—I never knew him. Once was at a lecture—his lecture on "Snakes"—at the London Institution. Once was at a house in Prince of Wales's Terrace—it was Mrs. Bishop's—where, for her delight and that of her friends, he lectured privately; and charming was he; but the performance was less

admirable and complete than that at the London Institution. At both places, what one felt about him was that he was benign and bewitching ; but at the London Institution—perhaps owing in part to the greater urgency of his theme (it was a protest, indignant, affectionate, against the evils of cramming)—at the London Institution he had the most of force and of depth.

I remember well his arrival—the door opening at the bottom of the theatre—and, with William Morris I think, and certainly Leighton and other friends, and patting Leighton on the back (or was it William Morris ?) a little nervously, yet bearing himself bravely, this man of world-wide fame and, what is so much more impressive and important to those who feel it at all, of extraordinary and magnetic genius—this genius was suddenly amongst us. And, gravely and slowly, with a voice at once of good quality, and with rough, Cumbrian burr, Ruskin began his discourse. All listened intently ; and as the theme developed, and his interest in it grew, and as he felt—for he must have felt—that he held us in the hollow of his

hand, the fascination increased, and the power and beauty that justified it. I have heard, with much delight, another genius and great artist—Tennyson—read several of his poems. The enjoyment was singular; the experience remarkable. But, in the drawing-room in Manchester Square, the author of "The Revenge; a Ballad of the Fleet"—not published then, but posted to the *Nineteenth Century*, that very night I speak of—reached no effect that was quite so much of an enchantment, as did John Ruskin, with the voice more and more wonderful and tender, that March afternoon in Finsbury.

X

CONSTABLE'S "ENGLISH LANDSCAPE"

THREE times, at least, in the history of Landscape Art, has some great painter kept, in Black and White, voluminous record of his achievement. Not to speak of a more limited, though still a beautiful, undertaking of Cotman's—a series of soft ground Etchings, very little known—there is the "Liber Veritatis" of Claude, the "Liber Studiorum" of Turner, and the "English Landscape" of Constable. It is the object of the present Essay to study a little the circumstances and the character of the last of the three. Collectors have of late recognised it; connoisseurs are *en train* to appraise it at its proper value. Its gospel is preached. But before I go further into its history, it may be well to remind people of what most obviously and effectively

marks it off from the performances with which I have for the moment associated it.

And, first, when I said "voluminous record" of a painter's achievements, that was a phrase which properly expressed only the performance of Claude. Claude's "Liber Veritatis" exists for us, as Turner's "Liber" and as Constable's "Landscape" does, in the form of work engraved and printed; the engraver's task, in the case of Claude, undertaken rather more than a hundred years ago by Earlom, prolific and able—but to the eye of Claude, we have to remember, his "Liber" existed only in the form in which he himself had wrought it—drawings with the pen, and drawings with summary or delicate washes—the things, priceless and masterly, on their limited lines, that we see at Chatsworth. They were done for a record. They were done for himself.

A record in another sense, one executed for quite another object than the making of a series of memoranda of his painted work, was Turner's "Liber." Turner desired broadly, not for himself but for the world—at all events the world of the Collector—a

representation of the spirit, the character, and above all, the range, of his work. The "Liber Studiorum" was to illustrate every mood that had stirred him, and every branch of Art into which his activity had strayed. And the foundation of each piece in that stupendous series was never, or was hardly ever, a painted picture, existing already when Turner decided that its theme should be the theme of a plate. Rather, he chose a theme; then, made, as guidance to himself and to whatever engraver should co-operate with him in engraving that plate —it might be Dunkarton, it might be Lupton, it might be Charles Turner, or some other—he made, I say, a sepia sketch of that plate's obvious subject; and this sketch was a preparation, a weapon, a means to an end. Such are, and such only are, the sepia drawings still sometimes ignorantly spoken of as the "originals" of the "Liber Studiorum." "Originals!"—they have no such dignity. The completed plate is the original, or the print, if you like—the plate revised, corrected, perfected with care. The drawing was but "material." The plate, the print, was to be all

in all—that was the *raison d'être* of the labour.

The same spirit actuated Constable in planning his "English Landscape"; though there was a difference in the method. Unlike Turner, he made no black and white drawing. Constable was content to find the basis of each plate to be executed, in either an "important" canvas or a small, vivid oil study—in something done already, of which he approved. That, the engraver was to translate; or, as I hold strongly, by that he was to be inspired. From a study of that would arise something, translation partly, partly creation too; it must be beautiful in itself, beautiful for itself: the spirit of Constable must be in it, and the dexterous hand of Lucas (the only engraver employed); and by the time it was found to be beautiful, or by the time it was deemed satisfactory from the point of view of Constable (who made no *sine quâ non* of verbal fidelity, so to say, to himself), it was, in some measure, a thing independent and apart—a thing not to be blamed or declared faulty by reason of now obvious non-adherence to that previously

existing work of Constable's which had supplied the foundation for the print reared but in part by its aid.

To continue a little the comparison of the " English Landscape " with the " Liber " of Turner, let me say that it consisted of two and twenty plates—Turner's were seventy-one. It is true, however, that, allied with the " Landscape," and akin to it, is a group of a few pieces which it was once intended to include. But against these, in Constable, must be set, on Turner's side, those mostly unfinished, always unpublished, " Liber " plates which, had they been issued, would have swollen the number of that publication fully half-way between the seventy-one that it reached and the hundred it was intended to reach. The question of numbers may not seem at first sight important—its bearing will be appreciated directly we consider the aim of the two works. Each, it is true, was to express the range of the master it illustrated. The range of Turner was limitless—not indeed his success. There is History in the " Liber " ; there is Mythology in it ; there is Architecture, for its own

sake; there are Marine pieces; there is Classic Landscape, built on the lines of Claude and Poussin; there is homely landscape, such as might have commended itself to Gainsborough or Morland; there is the more romantic—no, I should say, the more dramatic—vision, in which the creator of the picture deals, in his own new way, with mountain and storm. "English Landscape"—the very title reminds one—has no such different enterprises. Certainly it was to record what Constable painted. But what did Constable paint but the England of every day—the coast as well as the field, the woods and table land, the Downs and heath, the cottage and church tower—the England over which there swept for him such changeful skies as no one but himself had ever fully understood—had ever half as faithfully and subtly chronicled?

The charm of Constable's art, its truth and its impressiveness, is independent of colour. The black and white of the engraver—black and white, so called, but really every note of brown, of grey, of silver, that lies between them—

was, therefore, far more than in Turner's case, a sufficient medium to convey it. Moreover, although in the "Liber" the effect is broad, it is not broader than the effect in the "Landscape"; yet—it has not, I think, been sufficiently declared—Lucas's engraving has subtleties and delicacies, extraordinary gradations (for all its brute strength), scarcely within the means of all at least of those various and unequal craftsmen who were pressed into the service of Turner.

When Constable was sending out the preface to his collection of prints, this is what he said: "The author rests in the belief that the present collection of prints of Rural Landscape may not be wholly unworthy of attention. He had imagined to himself an object in Art, and has always pursued it. Much of the landscape forming the subject of these plates, going far to embody his ideas"—and then he paid a pretty compliment to the skill or genius of the engraver—"he has been tempted to publish them." A little further, "The aim of the publication," Constable said, "is to increase the interest in rural England: its

professional purpose"—he meant its artistic purpose, which is the only one he need have talked about—"to mark the influence of light and shadow upon landscape." He sought to give "a lasting and sober existence to one brief moment, 'caught from fleeting Time.'"

Constable is not so much the historian of the durable, as the recorder of the evanescent. He depicts scenes, and charming scenes; places, interesting places; but what is expressed most in his pictures, as certainly it is expressed most in David Lucas's prints, is the infinite delight—the infinite nuisance, also, I suppose—of various weather.

To mark, as it were, the homeliness, the domesticity of his enterprise, as compared with his rival's cosmopolitan range, Constable placed, as the first print in the series of "English Landscape," a vision, accurate I doubt not, but likewise humbly picturesque, of the small Georgian country house in which he was born. The house "of Golding Constable, Esq."—his "paternal house." A certain quiet dignity must have been about the house itself. "Light,

shade, and perspective," Constable's famous remedies for redeeming the "ugliness" of the object, be the object what it might; "light, shade, and perspective" were, in picture or print, to make it beautiful. "Spring" was the second piece—Spring which we hate in London, with the east wind blowing grey and grimy from over Stepney and Whitechapel, but which presents itself, no doubt, on Suffolk uplands, still as a cheerful season to the country labourer, to the farm boy at the plough. A great table land, a wide horizon, and the passing of clouds—that is the painter's and engraver's theme. "Autumnal Sunset," not one of the best pieces by any means, was the third of the set. "Noon," with its high field brilliantly illuminated, its distance of flat farmland in placid monotony, a telling contrast to the changeful pageant of the sky that is above and behind it, is the fourth. I am not completing the list; but a "Summer Morning," radiant, serene, comes a little later; later still, two visions of heath—and both are Hampstead, when, as yet, Hampstead was not suburban, but rural—and then a breezy sea, beheld

from Brighton beach; the curve of Weymouth Bay under a raging sky; "Old Sarum," lonely, solemn, and austere; a "Lock on the Stour," and the daily life of the everyday English land. The nature of the compositions, this little summary sufficiently indicates. Besides, as I said earlier, the Series covers the ground that the mind and the brush of the artist were accustomed to traverse.

The publication, as a whole, is dated 1833. But each plate is dated separately, and it was in 1829 that the work was begun—and really begun with the "Hampstead Heath Vignette," which, in the lists of the Series, occupies a later place. Like the "Liber" of Turner, the "English Landscape" was put forth in parts—how many parts there were to be was not settled at the beginning; and though, in the end, the "run of the piece," if one may so put it, did not stop with the abruptness of the "Liber," it was certainly curtailed by (in theatrical parlance again) the "frost" that it was proving. Artistically, as every competent person would allow, now-a-days, an amazing success, the engravings were a failure

commercially. And they were Constable's speculation; though, from one of many letters kindly placed in my hands by their possessor, Mr. H. S. Theobald, it is evident that Benoni White of Brownlow Street—publisher, perhaps, as well as print-seller—had been approached, unsuccessfully, about dealing in the prints. They were actually published by Colnaghis, of Pall Mall East—the very house that, seventy years later, I, for my own small part, was glad to be able to associate with the issue of a little volume devoted to their history, their virtues, and their "States." * But the Colnaghis of that remote day took, we may be sure, no share in the speculation of Constable's. The brunt lay on the painter, and expenses were uncertain and constantly growing; and Lucas, the engraver, was a genius, but tiresome; and Constable himself, I am convinced, though careful always, timid too often, worried much more than he would have done in better health and younger years, not only about the cost, but about the details of the work. Sometimes

* "Constable, Lucas, and the Prints They did between Them," 1904.

he did not know his own mind as to the changes he required in the plates; for details changed were changed yet again; and "my dear Lucas" had to be remonstrated with, on some occasions, a little unduly. "Those devils the printers," too, did not contribute to Constable's happiness. Bitter complaint is made, in the letters, of a certain "Rhodes." "Even Rhodes"—as if better things might have been expected of that worthy.

As to Lucas's plates, Constable liked the earlier ones better than the later; but, in doing so, had only, I think, some measure of reason on his side—for in the later pieces the inferiority was but occasional. The truth is, Constable was getting tired of the affair. He did not conceal his irritation. If a proof arrived, with which he was not satisfied, it spoilt his evening—an evening he had proposed to enjoy with friends—and he did not leave David Lucas in ignorance of the circumstance. Then, as to delays and difficulties, "Let me see and hear of these matters as little as possible." Then, when in a hurry, some communication with Mr. Lucas is necessary,

a despatch is sent "To Mr. Lucas, 27 in some street in Chelsea, but the Devil only knows where." It seems, however, that the postman also "knew where," for Mr. Lucas received the letter. Fortunately, one remembers, it was the little Chelsea of that day—the Chelsea of William the Fourth—and not the Chelsea of Lord Cadogan's extensions and improvements. "27 in some street in Chelsea, but the Devil only knows where." How sick was Constable of the whole affair, by that time!

About the troubles of the publication, and the friction over it, what need to gossip further? Rather let us concentrate our attention, in the space that is left, upon a couple of matters; one personal, the other both artistic and practical—let us get at some less slight understanding of Lucas and his position: let us see also in what stage of these prints' progress and issue it is most desirable to study or possess them. And the matter I have mentioned in the second place is that which I will speak of in the first.

The First Published States of the

"English Landscape" series—"Open Letter proofs" they have been called generally, but of course they are in no real sense "proofs" at all—represent, as regards their main features, as regards above all the inclusion or the exclusion of this or that detail, as to the character or presence of which it had been question in earlier stages of the work than the published one, the prints as Constable would have had them to be.

But there is one qualification to be made to this statement, and that removes much of its importance. It is not to be taken by itself. Even if we are ready to grant that in the vital matter of the printing, as much care was exercised in the large published issue as in the preparation of trial proofs for Constable's eye, it is certain that in the case of the "English Landscape" so many proofs were "pulled," so many changes made, that there was some amount—it is in the various pieces a very various amount—of deterioration in the plates by the time the published state was reached. In all Mezzotint Engraving a certain freshness, a certain opulence of

colour, goes, as the printing proceeds ; and the deterioration begins very early ; and the work of one engraver deteriorates more quickly than that of another. Collectors of the prints after Sir Joshua will tell us that ; and will instance Dean and John Jones as men whose charming work has little durability. If Lucas's went, as it did, very soon, in the case of the Constable landscapes, that is a tribute to the delicacy of the labour—Turner's own went very soon, in the " Liber Studiorum," and no plates in that series are more beautiful, more ethereal, than are several of the ten which Turner himself engraved. The " Inverary Pier, Loch Fyne, Morning," is an instance of this quick deterioration : the " Severn and Wye " is a yet more conspicuous instance of it. Their skies are of the daintiest, lightest, most refined touch—and in the prints by David Lucas piece after piece depends for its fine charm upon the intactness of the sky. Only, speaking generally, I would ask that this should be remembered—that somehow the more serious deterioration of the " Liber " prints begins, not at the end of the

Proof State at all, but appreciably later; and, again, that no sooner is this very marked deterioration declared than Turner himself—repairer habitually of the part, though only exceptionally first engraver of the whole—sets about to mend matters.

The thing being as it is—and the first deteriorations of moment occurring surprisingly soon, in Lucas's case—it is desirable to see these Constable prints, and to possess them, in their later Trial Proof stage. Then they ought to be perfect. But there is to boot a curious interest for the lover of the *fine fleur* of *technique*—for one who enjoys in a mezzotint that massive effect which comes so early and so early departs—in those Trial Proofs even that are not late at all. A working proof has this interest; a finished proof has another. But the working proof, though it may have perchance a pencil note of Constable's in the margin, ought not to be drawn upon and smeared with body colour. Where is the fine print then? Desirable, above all, is the brilliant Proof that has not so been handled.

And First States I have said are often admirable; and, in many instances, Second States, with re-letterings executed in Constable's day, are also attractive things, which none but foolish people would wholly and under all circumstances eschew. Only, after once Constable is dead—after once the plate itself is at somebody else's mercy—after a publisher has bought it, who knows nothing about delicacy, and has bought, moreover, a wreck—"Eschew it altogether" is the best counsel that can be given to the lover, not of great names merely—great names disgraced by the imperfect, damaged presentation of the great men's efforts—but of beautiful things.

And this brings me back to Lucas. Outside the "English Landscape" series, as we know it—the series we have now been considering—Lucas wrought, after Constable, other plates, fairly numerous. Four or five were large ones—of which it is possible that the large "Salisbury" is the most famous. I cannot believe that the appreciation of these will increase in the same proportion as the appreciation of the smaller. But by "the smaller" I mean

those in the Set, and two or three others—the smaller "Salisbury," particularly in the rare, fine proofs of it—and the "Windmill near Brighton"—pieces which only accident caused not to be included with the twenty-two of the "Landscape"; and I do not mean (save perhaps for one or two exceptions) those more numerous pieces which Lucas later issued, disastrously, upon his own account—mistakenly encouraged, as I think, to do so, by Constable's earliest biographer and faithful friend, Leslie.

A last word for David Lucas—as to whom much may be read with interest in Mr. Ernest Leggatt's Catalogue of his "complete works." An amiable being, wonderfully gifted, and, as Time went on, increasingly feeble and uncontrolled—a being half-artist and half-craftsman; half-tradesman too; affectionate, untrustworthy—he seems not often, save in the case of Constable's immortal enterprise—for immortal I hold the "English Landscape" to be—to have had his chance. Was it the man or the circumstances, or was it something of both? Anyhow, for years, for hardly less than a generation after Constable engaged him,

did this master of Mezzotint linger unappreciated, and for the most part unemployed, or employed but in work that gave no scope to his power. The year before Constable died—but two or three years after the "Landscape" Series proper was finished—Lucas engraved, with just as complete a grasp of another artist's manner, the "Return to Port, Honfleur," after the French Romantic, Eugène Isabey. A rare and excellent work. A few other things Lucas did—one or two "important," skilful, very impersonal portraits, and two or three small pieces wrought with delicacy, precision, strength; but soon he had had his day—his work was over, his opportunity lost.

S. W. Reynolds—almost the last of the engravers of Mezzotint of the great old school—formed, my reader may remember, or may like to be told, two brilliant pupils. One of them was Samuel Cousins; the other, David Lucas. The differing fates of the Idle and Industrious Apprentice, in Hogarth's pictorial narrative, were not really more different than the fates of these two artists. Neither was cut off early;

but one of them—Cousins—lived to an extreme old age—diligent in labour, punctilious in performance ; rich, an Academician, honoured, caressed—and the other, dying elderly, died disappointed, " gone under." A workhouse sheltered Lucas's last hours ; and the irregular, erratic, indefensible man of genius, had rest, after weary years, in a pauper's grave.

XI

ETTY

ENJOYING a great inheritance from the Venetians and a little legacy from Boucher, there lived and practised William Etty, of whom an exquisite example—which is a finished preparation, it would seem, for work intended once for the Summer-house at Buckingham Palace—decorated with its lovely line and faultless hue the wall on which it hung at Burlington House in the winter of 1891. This is a scene from the most pictorial of Seventeenth Century poems—Milton's "Comus." It puts before the spectator the "daughters three," who—

"Sing about the golden tree."

And never was garden of the Hesperides more finely realised. Etty—notwithstanding his often loose and occasionally inaccurate draughtsmanship—is sometimes seen at his best in the larger and simpler of his

studies from the Nude. They reveal the beauty of Nature into which he penetrated so deeply, and that beauty of his own palette, or his own vision, by which he was enabled to place Nature in her finest light. They are noble and luminous, pearl-like, or opalescent. But no study of a single figure can hope to possess the intricate and rhythmic grace of contour, the varied and subtle contrasts of hue, and the completeness of learned yet facile design which are presented in this picture of wreathed figures in pale golden air. A perfect refinement, without which Milton would indeed be maligned, presides over the treatment of the " daughters three "—blonde and brown and Venetian gold—to whom, under the rosy apple boughs, the principal place is given.

XII

LARGE WATER-COLOURS

"In any Art"—it has been laid down by one who spoke at all events with such authority as comes of refined practice—"in any Art it is criminal to go beyond the means used in its exercise." The words, spoken of the instruments of the Etcher, are applicable to Water-Colour. Water-Colour Drawing, though it has no reason to be petty, has no permission to be huge. Never, any more than Etching itself, has it been gigantic in scale, in the hands of its finest and most classical practitioners. The best art of Turner and Girtin, of Cotman, Barret and Dewint, took heed of the limitations imposed by the delicacy of the material, as certainly as the limitations of dry-point and the etching needle were observed by Rembrandt and by Claude, by Whistler and by Méryon.

Perhaps it may be the habit of exhibiting in a very large gallery, that tempts some Water-Colour painters of the day to a scale so inappropriate as the scale they often use. But they should remember that the future abiding place of nearly all Water-Colours is not the corridors of an Hôtel de Ville, but rather the parlour wall or the portfolio of the collector. Here and there, of course, these large drawings justify their scale by their success; but it is very rarely. At the best, almost, they are a *tour de force*—that being accomplished by an exceptional dexterity which oil painting would achieve without comment. The Sunflower—in Mr. Browning's poem—"loses a flower's true graces, for the grace of being but a foolish mimic sun." And Water-Colour, idly huge, abandons charm, yet scarcely attains to force.

XIII

H. G. HINE

It must have been in the early 'Eighties, that, walking occasionally up those heights of Hampstead and of Haverstock Hill, on which, according to the *mot* of Whistler, the "flock" of Sir James Linton at that time "browsed," I was accustomed to behold certainly one of the veterans of the sheep of that sheep-fold—an elderly man, strong of build, ruddy of countenance, unobservant of mere people, reflective, trudging along the highway, "taking the air." His head was large; he wore a large, loose hat; a large, loose coat; he stooped considerably; he was beaten by many winds. And this was H. G. Hine—who, when I first saw him, I remember, struck me as a possible skipper of a Channel coasting-boat—or as a possible yeoman, a prosperous yeoman, brought to the suburbs

of the Town by the interest for him of some Agricultural Show.

But this was H. G. Hine—in his own special subjects one of the most exquisite craftsmen in the Art of Water-Colour; master of individual and yet faithful visions of turquoise or opal sky, and of grey-gold or of embrowned-gold turf with the long restful sweeps and subtle curves of the chalk land.

An admirer of his Art before I knew the man, I came to know the man, and to admire him almost as much as his Art. A being of perfect rectitude, of absolute simplicity; cordial, not gushing; of sturdy good sense—one who had taken "with equal thanks" the "buffets" Fortune dealt him through many years and the "rewards" she meted out to him as her caprice changed.

But this is very conventional. Why blame Fortune for her various ways, when it was Hine who varied? He varied in this sense—that for twenty or thirty years of manhood he laboured with industry upon this or that subject-matter there was no reason to suppose could ever be peculiarly his own, and then, casting about him

for an inspiration, a remedy, a something that should allow him to retrieve the error of ineffective days, he came upon a theme touched by a predecessor—Copley Fielding—but by Copley Fielding never exhausted, never even properly fathomed—the theme of the great Down country, a land so uneventful to the commonplace—a land devoid of incidents, wholly devoid of prettiness—great tracts of upland pasturage, the thin sweet herbage of chalk lands : swelling hills that the light rested on, and that radiant skies paused over ; vast, scooped out "Bottoms" filled with blue-grey shadow—"Bible Bottom," in the great drawing of "The Malling Hills," is an example in Hine's Art ; and "White Hawk Bottom," under the Brighton Race Course, is known in fact, and should be known by name, to everybody who has ever presented himself at the Brighton "Spring Meeting."

Hine was a Brightonian. Somewhere or other I have an aquatint, done by him sixty years ago, that shows—and very characteristically too—the form and colour of the cliffs, looking from the Steine towards Rottingdean. But when he did that, it

had never occurred to him, that the themes he was, in his Art of Water-Colour, most finely to tackle, were themes that had lain about him before ever he thought of being a painter at all. When he did think of being a painter, he crossed the Channel—he addressed himself to Rouen. And, the public not responding very enthusiastically to these and many other efforts, he became a comic draughtsman—I believe a purely comic one, never getting into his drawings for *Punch*, as Charles Keene got, a generation ago, and as Raven-Hill gets to-day, suggestions, economical and vivid, of the deep interest that there is in English every-day Landscape. No : he was purely comic. That, perhaps, may, in its own way, for its own time, have succeeded. But when one thing failed after another, Hine bethought him—I remember his telling me so—of the enfolding Downs, with their broad, tranquil beauty : the shoulders of the Downs, and then the drop in them, the glades and Bottoms, the obscure, secluded places where—

" Little, lost Down churches praise
The Lord Who made the hills."

From advanced middle age to very advanced old age—for he died eleven years ago, at eighty-three—Hine went on producing, never hastily, never restlessly, those visions of the land of which he was a child: the vast high spaces, open to the heavens, in the calm of Afternoon: the flock descends the hill-side; the shepherd drags himself—a shepherd's walk could never possibly be rapid—the shepherd drags himself after them. In sheltered Bottoms, there are farmsteads, and screens of great trees; but high up on the Down, only a battered thorn-tree bends away from the sea-wind and the West.

That was Hine's material. That was the wonderful and almost elementary Nature which he—better than anybody else, unless in a quite different fashion it was his friend and rival, Thomas Collier—learnt to express. Like Thomas Collier, he was fond of getting away from his particular theme. From time to time, other subjects. But in these self-enforced departures—in this trying of his wings for fresh flight—he had not, as a rule, Collier's success. A Heath, or Moor, or Down of Collier's may

be matched, in force or exquisiteness, by his treatment of a Sea. Not so the rolling hills of Hine. Yet when he left his special world, Hine did not fail invariably—not even invariably at such times was his work of mediocrity. Once indeed, the painter of elastic turf and thin and sun-charged air, conveyed, quite excellently, the character of semi-solid fog—all Ludgate Hill calling aloud, as it were, for a woollen "comforter." And Hine painted tender moonlights.

But we shall remember him only a little by these things—by even the best of them. Hine's place in English Art is his by reason of the sure appeal of drawings that record the aspects, now solemn and now radiant, of the bare, golden uplands, on which is seen, under high skies, only a shepherd's figure—on which is heard only the tinkling of sheep-bells, or the passage of the Channel wind.

XIV

AN ENDLESS ROLL-CALL

A "DICTIONARY OF CONTRIBUTORS TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY" has been compiled by Mr. Algernon Graves, from careful study of all the catalogues of the Academy, from its foundation in 1769. They are melancholy thoughts that the book suggests—at least they must be, to the practising painter. It is difficult to say how many entries there are in it; but, astounding as it may seem, I believe they would be found to include something like thirty or forty thousand pictures. And we are carried by these to the letter "C" only; so that, if the proportion is at all maintained in succeeding volumes, something like half a million pictures will be found to have been shown at the Academy, since its foundation. Melancholy reflection!—when one remembers how few of them exist, practically; how few are recollected to-day.

But "worse remains behind." For how about the number of the unaccepted ones? To say they reached a million, of themselves, would be within the mark, thoroughly.

Yet there are people who look reverently at any picture, as a phenomenon—as a rarity—as a thing of importance. A picture is probably no rarer than a dining-room chair.

XV

THE FIELD OF THE PRINT COLLECTOR

THE frequenter of Picture Exhibitions, the lover or the casual observer of painted canvases, has, as a rule, no idea how much of the finest Art it is not necessary to go to any Exhibition to see. He ignores the fact that amongst the men of most original mind, to whom great pictorial conceptions have been vouchsafed, no small proportion have expressed themselves by the craft of Engraver or Etcher, at least as adequately as with the brush and the palette. He ignores his own privileges as a possible Collector of Prints.

I am met by the exclamation, "But a print has no colour!" Well, I am ready with my answer. In a strict sense, it has no colour—unless it be one of the inferior, trivial things that a mere drawing-room public runs after, in its most flippant hours;

for a superficial sense can alone be satisfied with the compromises, the approximations, which are all that is possible to the Coloured Print: the spoilt Morland, the enfeebled Wheatley, the sugary Bartolozzi meretricious and elegant. The coloured print is well described as "neither fish, fowl, nor good red herring." Do not let us imagine that the real lover of colour loves the coloured print. As well believe that the musician, versed in the strains of Palestrina, can take serious pleasure in waiting on the uneventful progress of a ballad-concert's airs. The lover of colour goes, of course, to Titian and to Turner, to Rubens and to Watteau, to Chardin and to Etty, and not to the coloured print.

I said, the print—the real Fine Print, I mean—has in "the strict sense" no colour. I do not know that we need claim colour for it in any sense; but what I meant by the "strict" one was that the engraver has a way of seeing colour and talking about colour, and, there is no doubt, of believing that colour is suggested pretty fully by those gradations of black and white, in which for my own part, I, a lover of colour

—of the rose, of sunrise, of green meadows, of the hues of cheek and hair—am content to see only "tone," gradations of black and white, from brilliant illumination to obscure shadow. In the fine print, Colour I give up frankly. The print has not that, but it has, or may have, everything else, and everything else in very high degree. Of the functions of pictorial art, it fulfils all except that one. It can give you atmosphere; it can give you form; it can tell you a story; it can rouse an emotion; it can diagnose a character; it can show in the artist who wrought it the penetration that belongs to Imagination alone, and it can stir imagination within yourself as you realise the range of its appeal.

And yet the absolutely ordinary person, with a full purse—and many a person who would feel himself grievously wronged if you considered him "ordinary" at all—goes on confining his inquiry into pictorial Art to a few visits to galleries where are many painted canvases, and confining his purchases to what are cumbersome and large-framed articles of furniture destined for the wall!

Yet, of course, Print Collecting has existed since the days of the invention of Engraving—since the days, at all events, when the *nielli* of the goldsmith yielded to the plate of copper employed by Dürer, Schöngauer, Mantegna, Lucas of Leyden—and Print Collecting exists to-day. Only, an enthusiast about the matter, a student who has thought this great, long-practised branch of Art worth pausing over, and worth profiting by, must perforce feel that it is a pity so many otherwise intelligent people have not acquired the eye that enables them to take keen pleasure in something that, if they be poor even, may yet be within their doors. And that—irrespective of opinions passed and hints dropped by the way—is a point I should be glad to insist on. The range of the Print Collector: the width of the field open to him: the opportunity for the rich man, the opportunity for the poor—the art, the fine art, in the sixpenny line engraving, to be fished, now and again, out of a dusty portfolio, on the Quai des Augustins, or in a street off the Strand, or in a second-hand bookshop in Westminster: the art, the fine

art, in the almost unique Rembrandt that Rothschilds or Vanderbilts struggle for, at Christie's, at Sotheby's, or the Hôtel des Ventes.

There is a moment, in the collecting of old books, for printing's sake, when Bodonis are in the ascendant, or Elzevirs. There is a moment, in the collecting of Bindings, when Roger Payne is sought for ; and there is a moment for Derome, and a moment—and it ought to be a long one—for Trautz-Bauzonnet. There is a moment when the buyer of First Editions is wanting Scotts and Richardsons, and a moment when he is wanting Wordsworths and Shelleys. And so in Print Collecting. Fashion, of course, counts. The adoption of a particular order of furniture—the recognition, say, as the right thing, of Sheraton or Hepplewhite —may bring about a demand for such prints as go with their sofas or their cabinets, or, such at least, as were wont, a hundred years ago, to stand over and stand against their furniture, when their furniture was new. The fashions of the last decade or so, as to *mobilier*, have enhanced the prices—would that they could also have enhanced

the quality!—of the Eighteenth Century coloured print, and of the delicate and feminine performance in stipple. Within the same period, other influences have made people buy, first, Etchings, and then—good Etchings; Etchings of Rembrandt, Méryon, Whistler, for instance, holding their own, all the while, as they have every possible right to do—then, within the same period, other influences again have made people buy Mezzotints.

These costliest things—in the fine impressions without which they are nothing worth—are, of course, for the well-to-do. But there are many classes of Fine Prints altogether outside the sort of things that I have mentioned: and to the collector of modest purse, or unremitting prudence, these offer their opportunity. But such collector need not even go outside at all. The coloured print—the first of fashionable matters that I mentioned—shall not be further discussed. Whether it is one that is in vogue, or one that is not in vogue, I will not be privy to any reader, beginner or student, buying it at all. Let it return to its obscurity: a prettyish, momentarily

engaging, easily-tired-of-thing, with not half —nay, not one tenth—the character and art in it of a poster by Steinlen, a poster by Toulouse-Lautrec, or by that true master of severe design and worthy Composition, Eugène Grasset. But Etchings, Mezzotints, and Line Engravings—ah! these, whether the ones in evidence, or the ones less sought for just now, can be discussed earnestly, can be seriously weighed.

Shall I begin with the Etchings?

The art of Etching has been used, not inconsiderably and not unworthily—as Line Engraving has been used very much, and Mezzotint almost entirely—for the rendering and diffusion of famous painted work. But it has been used, I was going to say more largely, but it is better, perhaps, to say more conspicuously and notably, in that wherein consists no doubt its highest service and most authentic mission—in the performance of original labour, the embodiment of original conceptions. The great masters of Etching—those in the first line, after all—are not Flameng, Rajon, Unger, Waltner, Macbeth—important and

charming as are the interpretations it has been their business to give—they are, rather, Rembrandt, Claude, Vandyke, Méryon, Whistler ; and (I shall add) Jules Jacquemart and Alphonse Legros. These men, and others—two or three, perhaps—whom I have not named, are the greatest masters of Etching. An extraordinarily rare print, in rarest state, by one of these artists, Rembrandt, sells for £2,000. A print, by Jacquemart, that is unquestionably great and beautiful, you need pay but a pound for, at Sotheby's. Clearly then, the auction-room, and clearly too the shop of the print-dealer—Colnaghi's, Obach's, Gutekunst's—is not only for the Astor, the Vanderbilt, the Rothschild—it is also for the intelligent poor man.

But about Rembrandt. Let us go a little more closely into the question of his famous prints, in the admiration of which I recognise no temporary fashion, but only the fitting acknowledgment of a position that lasts.

More, even, than by his painted work, the mind of Rembrandt—his extraordinary perception, his extended sweep, his penetrating

gaze, his philosophic view—is expressed in his etchings; and, as to money matters, is it not a welcome thought, a grateful, satisfactory reflection, that if there are certain prints of Rembrandt's, which—in given States at all events—cost, each of them, the price of a small house, or the price of a farm in Wiltshire, there are also certain prints of his, good and desirable, which cost, each of them, only the price of a second-rate bicycle, of a hired brougham to go to three parties, or of a Box to see Miss Adeline Genée or Miss Gabrielle Ray?

The matter of price depends, in the first place, upon rarity, and, in the second, upon the department of Rembrandt's work to which the print belongs. The Sacred Pieces, save one or two of the most sought-for ones; the minor Portraits; the sheets of Studies (often themselves a delightful little collection of minor portraits) are among the things least expensive. The more celebrated Portraits—the capital examples of the master's art in this kind—and the Landscapes, which are rare, nearly all of them, and which evince, peculiarly, the

charm of his reticence, the economy of his means, the inalienable fascination of his style, are the things which (leaving out the absolutely exceptional examples) now a fifty pound note, and now a note for four hundred, will be required to ransom.

How is it that Rembrandt expressed yet more conclusively in his etchings than in his painted canvases, the depth of his mind, the all-embracing range of his interest, and his control and mastery over the instruments of his art? Had he been primarily a colourist, he could not of course have done that. Titian and Watteau, addressing themselves to the copper, would have worked long, and then but insufficiently, inadequately, and fragmentarily expressed the particular vision which it was theirs to receive. But Rembrandt—a colourist too when he wants to be—needs not to be seen as a colourist. Give him the opportunity for tone, for radiant light, for sombre shadow, for great distance, for passing expressions—give him, as the model that shall inspire him, the landscape of quietude and the woman of

character—and the brush and the palette are no indispensable aids to him. With burin and etching needle *il se tirera d'affaire.*

Lack of opportunity, if not lack of money, will prevent the collector from assembling, in any time less than a generation, so splendid a series of the prints of Rembrandt as was possessed years ago, by Sir Abraham Hume, and Mr. Holford, and M. Dutuit of Rouen—nay, it must be admitted, alas! that it has become impossible for any collector, however, richly endowed, to rival now, or hereafter, the possessors of these treasures. But patience and ample fortune will still permit the accumulation of noble cabinets, and the intelligent poor man may possess himself of a few rare and exquisite things. He may get, for instance—if any luck be his—for five-and-twenty pounds, his *Mère de Rembrandt au voile noir;* for forty, perhaps, his picked impression of the wonderful *Lutma*—the Second State, " with the window and the bottle," which the collector merely of extremest rarities is foolish enough to despise—for fifty, a First State of the subtle portrait of *Clement de*

Jonge, or a *View of Amsterdam* or *The Landscape with an Obelisk*.

Vandyke's and Claude's Etchings are, in number, much more limited than Rembrandt's. The variety in their condition is, from different causes, hardly less great —they too have got to be bought warily— but if the price of any one of them runs into "three figures," that is, at all events, an unusual event. Common they are not —in any condition in which they are desirable—but, when the chance occurs, a five-pound note may ransom a Claude that is perfectly worth having: as it will, probably, a Vandyke portrait in the completed State, and in an impression in which the original labour of the master is not deprived of its effect. The Vandyke Etchings are nearly all of them portraits of Vandyke's brother artists. His touch, with little of Rembrandt's subtlety, is yet decisive, immediate, cunning, and, so far, excellent. But his work upon the plate stopped at an early stage—in most cases the plate was handed over, then, to a skilled professional engraver, who finished, sometimes with incongruous deliberation,

what Vandyke had impulsively begun. But it is a mistake to suppose that the thing ceases to have value and artistic interest the moment the copper has anything upon it excepting the etched head: the vast difference in price between the pure etchings and the prints with the figure added, is disproportionate and exaggerated. Study of the individual pieces will reveal many differences in true worth and charm; and even the average rich man, who buys by rule, need not be above remembering that a very few of the portraits—the masterly *De Wael*, conspicuously—Vandyke himself worked, no one else helping him, from end to end; so that in such a case as that (provided the impression be a good and intact one) sensible people have but to see that their print, with the initials "G. H." (those of Hendrix, the publisher), is on the old paper—that it is not later than the true Second State. For here, as elsewhere, of course, there are later issues—and a really late issue of a Vandyke is to be shunned as a late impression of a Claude or a late Rembrandt.

Claude, with a touch free and flexible—

less obviously masculine than that of the great Fleming—wrought to the point of pictorial completeness most of the score or so of plates which he produced. Unlike his noble drawings in bistre with the pen, his Etchings boast no swift and summary method. *Le Bouvier*, the sweetest of them, shows the copper coaxed and petted—won over to his purposes by what seductive and slow appeal! It is not always quite like that, of course. Simpler, more direct, though far from actually rapid, is the process in the *Wooden Bridge*, with the tufted trees and the landscape's placid sunshine, and in the *Cattle going Home in Stormy Weather*—or in threatening weather, rather; for there is but a suggestion of travelling rain-cloud over the hill. And—not to speak of two or three admitted failures, due generally to technical mischance—in at least one agreeable performance, *Le Chevrier*, complete tonality has not for a moment been sought for. Pale and grey and fairly uniform over the whole surface of the etched plate and in the different planes of the landscape, *Le Chevrier* relies for its delightfulness upon its exquisite

tree-drawing, and upon the suave disposal of every incident and object of the scene.

Forty years or so ago, Dutch Etchings by other men than Rembrandt, were habitually the objects of the collector's desire. Some of them have been discarded rightly. Others have lapsed from favour by mere accident or caprice. Now is the time to search for them. I do not expect that they will ever again be in the front rank, absolutely; nor do I profess that the best of them are anywhere deemed valueless now. But as, in a Past not very remote, they were esteemed too highly, so are they, as a whole, esteemed too lightly in our day. In the Future, there will be a reaction. And when that comes, Berghem, with his serene and ordered grace, and Bega, with his brilliant spontaneous transcripts from the life of the hour, will be placed, with little hesitation, I should suppose, by the side of Ostade—at present the only Dutch etcher, save Rembrandt himself, the occurrence of whose prints in the sale-room provokes even a semblance of curiosity or excitement.

Berghem has often been recognised; so have Adrian Van de Velde and Paul Potter;

but I do not know that Criticism has to this day sounded at all adequately the praise of Bega—most like Ostade, but yet differing from Ostade. Both men, even in their slightest performances, are masters of Composition. *La Famille*, of Ostade, beats anything of Bega's in triumphant intricacy of chiaroscuro; but effects of chiaroscuro, astonishingly broad and right and telling, are within Bega's command, and an extraordinary accuracy of dramatic action in the slightest affair. Had I to single out one particularly fortunate example of Bega's treatment of humble life, it would be, I think, the happily "unfinished" plate, *La Mère au Cabaret*. I say "happily unfinished"—it was stopped by Bega at precisely the point in which, with the copper but half covered, the balance of shadow and light was perfectly obtained, and the little story, such as it is, perfectly told.

Quite a small outlay puts a man in possession of charming things by Hollar, a Bohemian of Prague, who, coming into England towards the middle of the Seventeenth Century, found at least some patronage at the hands of that earliest of great

English collectors, Charles the First's Lord Arundel. Hollar could do original work, and copyists' work. For dear life, as much as for the love of his calling, he laboured assiduously. Late and long he toiled, and scanty sometimes beyond belief was his reward. He was the witness, or might have been the witness, of England rent in twain by the struggle between Royalist and Parliamentarian. Wenceslaus Hollar withdrew himself from the scene of it, retired to Antwerp, and there, of the plague, died miserably. The best English collections of his works have been those formed within the last forty years, and dispersed within the last twenty, by a most brilliant etcher, Seymour Haden, and by one of the last, best type of patient connoisseurs, the Reverend J. J. Heywood, who—though the literary piece in question is unsigned—surely wrote the admirable Preface to the Burlington Club's Catalogue of its Hollar Exhibition.

Between the Seventeenth Century and the middle of the Nineteenth, there was a great blank in the history—a curious ceasing, rather, in the production—of good

Etching. Early in the Nineteenth Century, David Wilkie and, yet more particularly, Andrew Geddes, wrought a few fine plates, but they form only a stone or two in the unbuilt bridge between Rembrandt and Méryon. The time was a time of Line Engraving; not of that original Line Engraving, of which I shall have a word to say, but of a not ignoble interpretative Line Engraving, in which the translators of Rubens—Vosterman and the two Bolswerts and others—and certain great Frenchmen, led the way. And it was a time of Mezzotint. The interpreters of Lely and Kneller were followed by those of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, Morland, Hogarth—Earlom's mezzotints of *Marriage à la Mode* are even more pictorial and acceptable than the prints of the line engravers who were Hogarth's contemporaries. Then came the interpreters—in Mezzotint now, and now in Line Engraving—of Turner, and then he who, until Frank Short's day, was the one interpreter in Mezzotint of Constable. That was David Lucas. Turner was served, in both the mediums, by admirable artists,

most of whom he more or less trained. In Line Engraving, employed upon the "Southern Cross" and "England and Wales," there were, very conspicuously, the Brothers Cooke, John Pye, and William Miller. In Mezzotint, employed upon the "Liber Studiorum," upon the "Ports of England," "Rivers of England," there were Dunkarton, Lupton, Charles Turner. For nearly all the first half of the Nineteenth Century, one or other of their works was proceeding on its way. The prints are held, naturally, in various degrees of critical or popular esteem. A fine First State of a print from the "Liber Studiorum" may be worth, perhaps, on an average, from twelve to twenty guineas. Half-a-sovereign will buy a very pleasant impression of a subject in the "Ports of England." But, the history of the blank period in Etching—when Engraving reigned in its place—having thus been lightly sketched, we will return to Etching in its second productive period, to be with the master, Méryon.

It was in the "Nineteenth Century" that, twenty-five years ago, I was permitted to first print an Essay, that has since been

republished in many forms and places, on Méryon's tragic story, and the characteristics of his work. I will now say little about him. The work has, obviously, not changed in the long interval—it was finished when I first wrote—nothing has changed but popular opinion and the money value of the prints. An impression of the First State of the *Abside de Notre-Dame*, poor Méryon—lonely, unrecognised, already half distraught, it may be—thought himself well paid for when he received for it, forty years since, from M. Wasset, of the French War Office, a franc and a half. A fine impression of the Second State, bought twenty years ago in Paris, for an Englishman, by M. Thibaudeau—whom I lament—cost four pounds, ten; and now an American print-seller amiably seeks and fails to tear that print from its possessor—*moyennant*, not four pounds, ten, but a hundred guineas. This little circumstance—so comforting to the practitioners of all the Arts—would seem to show that not much more than one complete generation need elapse between the death of a genius, tired, neglected, solitary, and the recognition

of him, in golden coin, a little of which he might have found useful. And, meantime—in Art, in Literature, in Musical Composition—the performance that has been on the level of its own day's public, has received that public's reward.

We were not, all of us, altogether appreciative—a quarter of a century ago—of the artistic message of Whistler. Sometimes Whistler exhibited his things in a condition in which, though they had reached cleverness (they did that from the very beginning) they had not reached perfection. That was the case with the first display of the Venetian Etchings. And it was a little trying. But Whistler—blithe and flourishing, even in moments when the world had not fully acknowledged the magic that belongs to him at his best—remained with us, to enjoy a eulogy pronounced at last without reserve, by qualified voices.

Scarcely a score of splendid coppers, built up with supreme force—with a deliberation rare in an etcher, and more habitually a property of such a master of the burin as was Albert Dürer—constitute, in a true

sense, the *œuvre* of Méryon: on these is founded an enduring fame. Whistler's fame, too, will last; but, putting pictures, lithographs, drawings, out of our purview, the sources of Mr. Whistler's fame, the qualities that justify it, are to be found distributed over two or three hundred etchings, of which the first were wrought in 1857 and 1858, and the last but some ten years ago. To make complete collections of an artist's work—even to endeavour to make them—has gone very much out of fashion. Would that the habit—the old collector's habit—might come into fashion again, in cases where it is possible!—because it is that patient, exhaustive, concentrated collecting that has given us the true connoisseur, that has educated the expert. And our way now—the ordinary cultivated person's way, I mean—is one that is too far removed from that. It consists in knowing a few masterpieces, or a few favourite plates, and leaving quite outside appreciation the bulk of a great man's labour.

But in the case of Whistler, as in the case of Rembrandt, complete collecting is

impossible. Neither Mr. Howard Mansfield in New York, nor Sir John Day, nor Mr. Theobald in London—admirable amateurs, one and all, whose rich possessions are to be envied earnestly—has, I feel sure, an absolutely complete assemblage of all that Whistler ever wrought. Perhaps Mr. Freer has now, at Detroit—but at what cost! A few plates, a very few plates at least, must be lacking to most of them. But collections are still to be formed: important groups, of twenty, thirty, fifty etchings, are still—with a will, with patience, and not without some money—to be got together. Those groups should be representative. Starting with one or two pieces taken from the early "French Set," such as the *Vieille aux Loques* or the *Marchande de Moutarde*, they should go on with two or three examples from the "Thames Set," such as the *Black Lion Wharf* or the *Thames Police;* they should include one or two dry-points of the "Leyland period"—for so collectors speak of a few years of Whistler's middle time—one or two sweeping visions of the Thames, after the time of the "Thames Set," such as *Price's Candle Works*, in the

First State at all costs, and the *Large Pool;* and then they should not close without the *Little Venice*—that faultless and refined dream—a piece or two from the later Dutch series, from the Brussels etchings, from the Loire etchings, and happy will be the collector if he can add to these, *Busy Chelsea*, or *Battersea Bridge*. The fact that on some previous pages in the present volume I have treated Whistler by himself would scarcely have justified my passing him without proportionate mention in the present essay.

Seymour Haden, founder of the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers, was, until the somewhat recent appearance of Mr. D. Y. Cameron, the only English artist whose work competes at all, in reasonable acceptability, with Whistler's. The vigour of Seymour Haden's labour is more quickly evident. Its exquisiteness—but Whistler's exquisiteness is altogether his own. Seymour Haden—beginning serious work in 1864 or 1865—has produced about three hundred plates. And they have largely circulated; for they are not only sound, strong, skilful etchings, but delightful

presentations, most of them, of the landscape they record: produced in happy moments, under an impulse not to be gainsaid. And those of them that, through any circumstances, have become rare, have, as years have passed, increased in price, greatly. Seymour Haden's vogue, which shows no signs of ceasing, has been already a long one. Popularity belongs to the spirited prints etched in the 'Sixties—of which the *Agamemnon* is chief—and to the broader, richer dry-points of a later time: to the rare *Windmill Hill* for instance.

Two or three French etchers, of the mid-Nineteenth Century, one knows and has to mention, as the equals, more or less, of the greatest. How many people have heard of Ribot, a sort of Chardin of the etching needle, who, in six lines, sometimes, gives character to cooks and scullions? How many, of Veyrassat?—whose white horse and whose black horse are placed together in the ferry boat, or plod together through the ploughed field, under a wide sky. How many of Lalanne? Or of Jacque—as an etcher? How many, of a man who was not French by birth, and who has

etched best of all the slow canals of his own lowlands—Jongkind? But it was not of these that I was thinking; nor even of Millet. I was thinking of Bracquemond; though he has wrought, it may be, not always wisely, and too much—the note of singular originality and genius struck in *Le Haut d'un Battant de Porte*, not having been sustained. But, were it by *Le Haut d'un Battant de Porte* alone, Bracquemond is destined to live. I was thinking of Jacquemart, who entered into the very soul of beautiful things—one of whose exquisite reproductions of arms, or armour, or porcelain, a pound or so, and sometimes less than that, will, as has been said before, to this day buy. And I was thinking most of all of Alphonse Legros.

Legros is a belated Old Master, and the belated Old Master does not find the readiest acceptance from the busy modern world. Legros's time has come, however. He has possessed his soul in patience, and as years have followed years, he has enlarged the range and enhanced, I think, even the quality of his art. Legros's figure-subjects, such as *La Mort et le Bûcheron* and the

marvellous *Chantres Espagnols*, have ever been pathetic and weird—a meditative, reticent poetry is of the very warp and woof of his mind. And he is a master of *technique*—of simple ways, deliberately adopted, after knowing all ways. Writing twenty years, or even ten years, since, about his Landscape, one would have had less to say about that than one must say to-day. For almost lately there has been granted to his landscapes of France, such as *Les Tourbières* and *Le Mur du Presbytère* and *Le Pré ensoleilé*, a refinement of vision, a perfection of performance, such as comes to two or three men only, in the course of all the history of a great Art.

But it is time that original Line Engraving passed, briefly and rapidly, under view. Briefly, not only because of necessity, but because of desirability—there is less that is in any way new to say about it, than about that other art from which we now turn. The collector of modern mind will not be likely to throw himself very enthusiastically into the pursuit of prints, many of which appeal to antiquary rather than to lover of pure Art—so much Italian work

betrays the archaic, bears the stamp of the Primitive.

Of the best Renaissance Line Engravings wrought in Italy, some—like most of our English Mezzotints—are translations of other artists' designs. Such are Marc Antonio's, which were the objects of curious research and interested comparisons, between collectors, forty years ago. Such even is one piece of Zoan Andrea's which I cherish—the *Dance of Damsels*, after Andrea Mantegna: a rearrangement, more or less, of a group in Mantegna's "Parnassus." The fine and wholly original things in Italian Line Engraving are not so very numerous, and it is seldom they are found in the condition the collector wants. The austere spirit of Mantegna, relaxing for a while in that *Dance of Damsels*, is expressed, perfectly and characteristically, in prints it is so difficult to light upon. Dürer, who, in the Low Countries, appreciated and exchanged prints with Master Lucas of Leyden, had hoped, in travelling to Italy, to behold Mantegna. But when Dürer reached the South, the mortal part of the great master whom one associates

with Padua and with Mantua—though Vicenza was the place of his birth—the mortal part of the noble and always masculine Mantegna was no more there.

Lucas van Leyden was not, on the copper, such a draughtsman as Dürer ; but he was strong and quaint, dramatic, interesting. And, over and above those many pieces which are concerned with human fortunes, Lucas van Leyden's design in Ornament, both for line and for light and shade, was of the most ingenious, the most subtly symmetrical, the most accomplished.

But for sheer dexterity of execution, for pure brilliance of technical effect, and for excellent design to boot, one of the seven German " Little Masters "—Heinrich Aldegrever—bears the palm. I speak of him as a master of Ornament. Barthel Beham, another of the " Little Masters," would concern us more closely if he had been more productive. Scanty, at best, is his admirable *œuvre*, and scarce are the examples of it. But there is Sebald, his brother. On the small scale which, fortunately, in these German works, is never dissociated from greatness of style and

scheme, Hans Sebald Beham—whom, years ago, Mr. Loftie rightly eulogised—produced plate after plate which dealt, now with Ornament, now with popular and peasant life, now with grim and impressive Allegory. The English print collector—alive to the naïve prettiness of Martin Schöngauer—has been strangely slow to appreciate the value and the fascination of Sebald Beham's work. A poor impression of a plate of his is scarcely worth buying ; but five or six guineas, and a little patience, will even now secure a fine one. Has the English collector an excuse for his neglect ? I doubt it. The best that he could urge would be devotion to Dürer—a continuous occupation with the efforts of that master-mind, that well-controlled burin.

Alas ! the true collector is himself so rare a person. In Germany—where the cost of Dürer line engravings increases every year, and where even the woodcuts not actually of his own execution, are welcomed—any good Dürer would be the subject of keen interest, and the motive for reasonable rivalry. There is no fear there, at all events, that the less conspicuous

of Dürer's pieces, wrought upon copper, will be neglected. But with us it is too much the tendency to ask for the *Melancholia*, the beautiful *Nativity*, the *Knight of Death*, if we can afford to have it; and to forget the quaintness of the charm, the happy *naiveté* of conception, the exquisiteness of the workmanship, of his various presentations of the Virgin and Child—of which the *Virgin with the Pear* and the *Virgin by the City Wall* (never, indeed, obtainable, in good condition, unless pretty well paid for) are two of the most admirable. "The great Albert!"—as the most affectionate and reverent of his devotees delight to call him—of his work the sane and masculine admirer of Art finds it impossible to tire. Would we discover him at his most solid, and his most superb, the *Great White Horse* and the *Little White Horse* may be resorted to. Would we seek, in a single little print, his finest grace of line, his most genial mood, the spirit of the Renaissance at its best, there is the plate of the *Three Genii*, whose limited inches give dignity and radiance to any place in which it is.

XVI

THE NORWICH MASTERS

In asking leave to treat together Cotman and Crome, I must at first sight seem—with those who really know—to owe apologies to both of those great artists. But there are cogent reasons for doing the very thing which in the first instance will seem natural and appropriate only to those who approach superficially or distantly the Norwich Landscape School. He who is least learned in it is of course aware that to that School belonged these two superior, thoroughly individual painters—that they were, indeed, its chiefs. Together, more or less, he classes them—mildly surmising their similarity, and unsuspicious of their difference. I treat them—however slightly I may treat them—I treat them in one Essay, not because I think that anything beyond the accident of a locality brings

them together, but just because I hold that in their genius and production they are apart absolutely, and that is what I desire to make plain.

The countryside that gave birth to the one gave birth to the other. And their days overlapped. And since in certain years of Crome's maturer life and Cotman's boyhood the roofs of one city sheltered them, their walks were from time to time in the same places—their subjects, at least their nominal subjects, were from time to time the same.

The little they had in common there ends, however. Even socially—though I do not want to insist upon that too much—they were of different worlds : a line almost as distinct dividing Cotman—the more or less educated son of a well-to-do silk mercer of the East Anglian capital—from Crome (whose people were artisans or publicans) as from persons of the upper middle class, persons in good County or good professional Society. Indeed, as time went on, Cotman —notwithstanding restricted means—was nearer that Society than the Society of Crome. He was admitted to it, more or

less. His tastes fitted him for it. But Crome, by his own nature or by his circumstances, had no such range and vista.

And what I have just said implies at once a difference in the genius of the two. Crome was a simple Realist—not blind, indeed, to the poetic, or at least the graceful and agreeable, side of Realism : the Realism that had amenity. But Realism, after all. Representation sufficed him—representation of fact. The fact might be devoid of beauty, or it might be abundantly possessed of it. Now, fact and representation of fact were not enough for Cotman. In different degrees, of course—moved at different periods by impulses of different strength—Cotman must invent, arrange, alter, enhance. This temperament, this ambition, this various and subjective vision, ensured for him a greater inequality of performance, and made failure almost as inevitable as triumph. For Crome, it was land always —" land, the solid and safe." The feats of Cotman, so to put it, were in deep waters and exalted skies. That is, he was, in much of the most characteristic of his work, *tout bonnement* a poet.

To say this, is not to disparage in the least the achievements of the older and more widely accepted artist. About Crome there is the interest of steady and excellent performance: about Cotman, the fascination of splendid endeavour and of purely individual gift. A Public at present unenlightened enough to class men to some extent in virtue of the medium in which they practise, finds in Crome's addiction to oil paint, in Cotman's addiction to water-colour, a yet further reason for assigning to the former priority of place. Oil paint was Crome's material. He drew in water-colour very little—much of his work being accomplished before Water-colour's day. But he did draw upon the copper—to that degree he was an etcher—and he came between the two great periods of Etching. But to that degree alone. For the time was not one in which what is really an essential part of Etching—the printing from the plate—was held to demand the attention of the artist. Crome was never concerned with that. And, if he was concerned at all, he was concerned only ignorantly, with a part of Etching yet more essential

for the artist to command—the "biting," the action of the acid. Technically speaking, therefore, Crome was no more etcher than water-colour painter. He was just a draughtsman on the copper. But the draughtsmanship itself was delightful—it was accurate and free, and characteristic. It made a series of agreeable memoranda of the scenes he loved. And, this much recognised, and stated, it is to Crome's oil painting that we return.

For a quarter of a century at the most did Crome practise his art. Born in 1769, in a small public-house in Norwich, he was at twelve years old a country doctor's errand-boy, and later he succeeded in getting himself apprenticed to a house and sign painter, and the story may be repeated for what it is worth that he was the first to compass the not very considerable artistic achievement of imitating in paint the grain of woods.

The subjects of certain of the pieces visible at the first exhibition of the Norwich Society of Artists, which he, with Robert Ladbrooke and others, founded in 1803, prove that Crome, though not greatly

travelled, had by that time strayed beyond his own borders. Cumberland and the country of the Wye—perhaps North Wales also—had known his steps. Later, in 1814, he was once in Paris, where, with a due regard to the foliage, and as a landscape painter only, he painted the Boulevards. In 1821, when barely fifty-two years old, Crome died, and as Gainsborough is said to have declared in loving-kindness on his death-bed, "We are all going to Heaven, and Vandyke will be of the company," so it is told of Crome that his last uttered thought was a protest of his life-long devotion to a master of Dutch landscape, "My dear Hobbema, how I have loved you!" "Ben trovato," whether "vero" or not. The exclamation is at least one that would have registered accurately what had been upon the artist's art the most potent influence.

Not that Crome was a copyist or plagiarist, however—the Dutch Realists started him: flexibly he adopted their art to the conditions that lay about his life. Some of the scenes that he lived amongst recalled the very scenes that they had

painted—the avenue ; the shade of woodlands ; the light upon the sandhills. But other scenes he treated brilliantly and sterlingly, that they had never known. It is the air of the uplands that stirs upon his Mousehold Heath—done, he said, " for air and for space "—it is that, too, that bathes his " Windmill on a Heath " (again Mousehold Heath, I imagine) ; and not a Dutchman's at all is the vision of the " Slate Quarries," which, wrought about 1805 probably—and probably in Cumberland, and not, as the National Gallery Catalogue asserts, in Wales—is a noble rendering of observed fact. 1816 is the year of " Mousehold Heath " ; and in the subtlety of atmosphere in that, and in the " Windmill," and in the more limited spaces of the " Poringland Oak," the climax of Crome's art must, I think, have been reached. The sturdy but not unpicturesque veracity of these things would, at any time, have been an achievement, and we must remember that in English Landscape Painting the ground had scarcely been broken when Crome worked. Crome was nearly as much Richard Wilson's contemporary as Constable's.

Two other things I want to note briefly, before I pass on to Cotman. One of them is the remarkable intricacy of illumination in Crome's "Chapel Fields"—shifting and travelling light, in which breadth is never lost or forgotten. And this of itself brings me to the other—Crome's relation to a yet earlier English master—Gainsborough. Gainsborough, too, in Landscape, had been started on his way by something of admiration and of knowledge of Dutch Seventeenth-Century painting. Between Crome's earlier work and Gainsborough's there is therefore an affinity, over and above that which might be brought about by a measure of likeness in their earlier themes. Compare, for instance, the "Great Cornard,"—an early Gainsborough, famous and exquisite—with many a Crome. But while Gainsborough, concerned with Landscape in his later time, attained a breadth not in the admirable "Great Cornard," and sought for and reached picturesque generalisation, there was in Crome's maturer work no generalisation at all, no mere picturesqueness, no studied grace of rusticity, no merely decorative effect. Crome in his

greatest breadth is only all the truer to the particular place and the particular hour. Master, at least as much as Gainsborough was, of the "technique" of oil painting, he is concerned less consciously with an individual vision, an individual invention. He interprets largely and boldly, but he interprets with fidelity, still.

An individual vision, from end to end, was Cotman's, and as he grew in sensibility, it was a characteristic of his work to gather grace. Cotman began in sturdy strength, and continued and ended in recognisable poetry—in performances sometimes, but not invariably, on a level with his thought: in performances, sometimes, of almost ineffectual passion. Which, being said, it is implied that gaining certain qualities, he lost or was poorer in others. The works that represent him really, must, much more than Crome's, be works drawn equally from the earlier and latter half of his career; and we are free, I think, to admire most that which may most appeal to us—the period in which, while being still individual (for he was ever that) he had affinity with Girtin—was sober, strong, restrained—or

the period in which, with something of the audacity of Turner's later palette, he laid his brilliant, lustrous blues against his gold and his piercing scarlet. As he was a drawing-master for most of his days—privately first, in the Eastern Counties, in Norwich and Yarmouth, which were successively his homes, and publicly afterwards, in London, when Turner, by his "Elect Cotman! Elect Cotman," contributed to get him his appointment at King's College—Cotman's reputation has been in danger of suffering by the placing on the market of piece after piece that he never saw, unless perhaps momentarily to blame, to correct, or to amend it. He has been copied with various degrees of skill—his own high level never, by even the most adept, having been reached; but, naturally, his composition, his schemes of colour, his breadth even (though in that case it has been a breadth degenerating into emptiness) having been often mimicked with adroitness and care. I put this prominently, because in these more recent years of my admiring acquaintance with Cotman's labours, the tasteful purchaser has sought his work, and has,

not seldom I think, been furnished with that which is only passable imitation of it. As to his oil painting, already, in comparing him with Crome, it has been said, or suggested, that there was very little of that. In high places, not all is his that is assigned to him.

Young Cotman's father, able to retire in his later life to a villa at Thorpe—a river-side villa with something elegant about its garden, of which Cotman more than once made use—Cotman's father, it is evident, though he never endowed Cotman richly, offered no serious opposition to the lad's determination for a career of Art. So Cotman studied in London—it may be not very regularly, but still studied. At eighteen years of age, it is recorded, he had something accepted at the Royal Academy, whose standard for work in Water-Colour has never been exacting. Afterwards—for some few years, it would seem—he wintered in London, and, in summer, wandered in the country. But in 1806, when twenty-four years old, he settled down in Norwich, and, three years later, married Anne Miles, daughter of a farmer

at Felbrigg. From 1812 to 1823, he lived chiefly at Yarmouth—going three times to the North of France, however, on the advice of Dawson Turner, the antiquary, or actually in his company. "Architectural Antiquities of Normandy" (1822) was the result of these visits—a book, of course, of definite value, though, artistically speaking, far less characteristic and attractive than the soft-ground etchings of much force and suavity and charm, which, as late in his career as 1838, Cotman issued as his "Liber Studiorum." His second residence as householder at Norwich lasted from 1823 to 1834, and in the last-named year he went to London—first, temporarily, to Gerrard street; then to Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, for his King's College labours; and in Hunter Street, in July, 1842, he died, and was buried in the dull suburban cemetery behind St. John's Wood Chapel—within sound, now, of the cheers from "Lord's" and the screech of the Metropolitan Railway.

The extraordinarily sensitive temperament of Cotman—who had no such "staying power" as that which has been

possessed by giants of Art: by Titian, Turner, Ingres, for instance—ensured him a life eventful by its rapid succession of occasions for pleasure and for pain; and so from joy and elation, and the open air and sunshine of the spirit, Cotman passed often into caverns of gloom. There is record of both these phases. Cheery letters to his son, Miles Edmund—at Norwich at that time—express, sometimes humorously, the satisfaction he had in living with his equals, in opportunities of intercourse with such as were really his kind. Again, melancholy letters, full of the profoundest depression, display the other mood, and hint even at its causes. Reading them, we are again in the key of comparatively early letters written from Yarmouth, to the Reverend Mr. Gunn: "My views in life," he had said, then, "are blasted. I sink under repeated, constant exertion." And Dawson Turner —much about that time—had been kindly and earnestly interested in putting Cotman's money affairs upon a better footing. For a time things went more smoothly; but much of his life was struggle. At length, from Hunter Street, to his son again: "It

was my wish, it was my duty, to paint for your sake when you were here ; but I could not—I was ill in body, and spiritless. I am not quite well, but better." The last autumn of his life, going down to Norwich, in the dark days that precede Winter, when rains had placed the country under water, and low skies still hung over the drowned fields and the tops of the willows, he made with unabated power certain sketches in charcoal. One of them is "The Wold Afloat"—a drawing scarcely less a masterpiece, in its own rapid, economic way, than the severe and solemn "Breaking the Clod." It is one of the many noble and typical designs which passed, two or three years since, into the British Museum, from the hands of Mr. James Reeve, of Norwich.

Breadth was the characteristic of Cotman's earlier, as well as of his later, production, whatever was the medium in which he laboured ; and grace and distinction, elegance and style, not disregarded at the first—as a wan "Byland," of 1803 is itself enough to show—came, before the last, to be with him a more constant preoccupation. But then, as time went on,

Cotman's schemes of colour became more audacious, more violent, and their result less certain; so that elegance of composition and form told often less potently—were, in a measure, neutralised. My "Bishopgate Bridge," which, like a "Mousehold Heath" that was Mr. Reeve's, and is now at the British Museum, is, I think, extremely typical of Cotman's straightforward strength; it has in it also—has in it in a greater degree, perhaps, than "Mousehold Heath"—dignity, balance. Simple, as are its elements, it may be better composed. Both drawings—massive and forcible—are of about the period of 1810. For the predominance of elegance—I would even say stateliness, as well as for the intrusion of violent colour, we must wait a good deal longer; though an admirable "Chiswick,"—Sion House, Mr. Loftie kindly tells me that it really is—its lawn sloping to the river, gives at no late date the grace, without crudity of hue.

Quite early architectural drawings—generally Norwich church interiors—are of the soberest and most seductive execution:

economical, simple. Great contrasts, striking effects in colour and tone, with a certain massiveness never in such work forgotten, are characteristic of the sea-pieces of Cotman's middle time—the years when he lived at Yarmouth. "Golden Twickenham" has the whole of his charm of Style—the stateliness that was his, in some of his happiest, most self-possessed hours. And if the "Blue Afternoon"—which, like the "Golden Twickenham," is at the Turner House, at Penarth—has in it a touch of exaggeration, it is exaggeration conscious, intentional—it is emphasis, rather. It was done with a purpose, and the purpose was attained. The British Museum's—or is it Mr. J. L. Roget's?—less "pronounced" version of the same theme is more lightly radiant, daintier. It is smaller, too. It speaks of an execution smaller, more precise—it speaks of a different mood.

And Mood is one of the characteristics of Cotman—the mood of woman or poet. He was equipped, of course, for most diverse labours, by his firm and well-drilled talent. But it is to a nature receptive at all its pores—played on by scene and by

circumstance—responsive to so many appeals—that the Collector of to-day, turning over these drawings of grace and of strength, owes very much of the variety, and most of the fascination, of Cotman's flexible, ecstatic, dignified Art.

XVII

THOMAS COLLIER

FOURTEEN years have passed since the grave closed over the mortal part of Thomas Collier. His uneventful life may have had no need to be chronicled—we are free at least to consider a little the charm and characteristics of his Art.

In his later years, Collier now and then painted in Oil; but of all the volume of his production, nine-tenths was accomplished in Water-Colour. Therefore he is less the successor of Constable than the successor of David Cox. And with David Cox he has often been compared; not alone by reason of his choice of a medium, or by reason of his choice of a theme—quite as much, I suppose, by reason of a certain obvious similarity in the essentials of treatment. Both men possessed, in most unusual measure, the secret of wise choice

and wise elimination. Economy of means, decision of hand, belonged to both alike. To both had been vouchsafed a noble vision of quite homely scenes.

So much for the similarities. It is worth spending a moment in understanding and defining the differences; for, holding well in one's mind the points of likeness and divergence, one should get more readily at the individuality of Collier. And in this connection, it is well to set down, first, how differently the two men fared as to the length of their days; and next—and more important—at what widely separated epochs in the lives of each, each "came into his own"—obtained, that is to say, in Art the means for complete self-expression. Cox lived to be seventy-six; Collier hung on to Life in middle age by but a slender thread—I remember him slow of movement, sad, silent, delicate, refined—and he died at fifty-one.

Now if Cox had died even at sixty, he would not have been the artist we know—he would not have emerged from timidity; he would have been careful and exact; he would not have been inspired and vehement.

The genius of David Cox—not his acceptable talent—came to him in his old age. It is not generally recognised, but it is true, certainly, that all that is most precious in his work belongs to the last sixteen years of his long life—from 1843 to 1859. I have said this before. He had time to prepare, and time even to dally.

Collier, upon the other hand, had need to be himself with promptitude, and was himself, in the fullest sense, by the day that he was thirty. It is as if some private warning had been conveyed to him betimes —the curtain would fall early: the play must be played. A very small proportion of the work of his hand belongs to a period which we can call immature—a very small proportion belongs to a period in which it might not even be profoundly characteristic. To him pertained, almost from the beginning, freedom of manner, largeness of vision and of touch.

I have long held—and am to-day far from alone in holding—that Collier had a subtlety of perception and execution yet greater than that of the master with whom I have compared him. And the range of

his themes—of those that he could treat most brilliantly—was at least as extensive. There has never been a Water-Colour painter more independent of the presence, in the landscape before him, of visible majesty or of romantic charm. And no one has been less topographical. He painted—and more particularly in the vivid sketches which are the very crown of his achievement, and by which, I think, most of all, will another generation judge and praise him—he painted, I conceive, not so much places as the spirit of places: and not so much the spirit of the place as the mood of the particular hour. He painted Weather. Quietly reticent in the indication of its serenity—able enough recorder of pearly air over a league of summer sea—he was yet at his greatest, not when the day was Hine's, but when it was Constable's: a broken sky; charged rain clouds that now scattered onwards, hurried by wind; glints of sunshine, glints of blue. And under the heavens so dramatic and interesting, sometimes great mountains, drawn massively; but oftener the common and, a Heath, purple and black in the late

Autumn, or the Downs, golden and golden-brown in mid-September, or only fields and open roads, a farmstead, white gates and the hedgerow. Whatever is there, free air is there. The country of Thomas Collier is a tonic to the citizen.

This painter of England and of English skies found favour in France. Valued member, of course, of his own " Institute " —the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colour—official recognition (" decoration," that is) came to him in France alone. The Land that understands all Art—the People who are ready to receive it—made him a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. They admired the truth, the charm, the lightly-worn learning, the technique's unerring decisiveness. And so, promptly, and with comparatively limited opportunity of estimating him, they saw he must have precedence—they motioned him to " the velvet of the sward." In other ways, some sixty years before, they had done the same for Constable. And their choice, each time, was a right one. For Collier—I have been daring to say it during a dozen years, whenever the occasion allowed me to—was not

a clever painter, but a great one. Connoisseurs, it may be—a few of them at least, who have examined for themselves—have not wondered at the epithet; and as, lately, to a much larger English public, through exhibition of a great body of his work, the chance was for the first time given of knowing how unfaltering is his effort, how sustained his excellence—the simple and retiring man, struggling for years, as I remember, with Death as well as Art—even that larger English public is tending to accord him, without cavil or questioning, his place amongst the Masters.

XVIII

PICTURES BY ORCHARDSON

Of all the instances which recent Art affords of the possibility of treating contemporary themes with serious beauty, one of the most notable is Orchardson's picture, a " Mariage de Convenance." It is something to have dealt with artificial light, even though it be but the mellow glow of a moderator lamp, with the delicacy that is therein displayed. But it is more to have felt the picturesqueness, the true serviceableness for designer and colourist, of that which is offered by the modern apartment. I admit it is the apartment of the rich. Fine glass glistens on the dining-table, and these dessert dishes are of the green of precious Sèvres. Still, there is the lamp with its crimson hanging-shade. There is the butler of to-day, and to-day's dress-coat. And, save for the spot of blankest white on one

shirt front, nothing is out of harmony. Nay, such a negative phrase is not enough —the fact is, that the picture gleams and glows with noble colour.

But Orchardson, whether painting the Eighteenth Century or the Nineteenth —the "Queen of the Swords," or the "Mariage de Convenance"—has always been an artist. Comparatively lately has he become a dramatist also. The "Mariage de Convenance" must be intensely true. A haughty, sulky, self-willed beauty of eight-and-twenty — a large blonde thing of stately figure, but repellant expression—has married a man not only thirty years older, but ignoble, exhausted, in all respects uninteresting. And he is sick of a sulkiness he had not bargained for, and she is dully angry at a premature indifference she had not foreseen. The moment approaches when she sweeps to the door, and for to-night at all events there is an end of the thrice weary *tête-à-tête*. Out of his presence she may sulk a little less, and he—when she is gone —may see the sky of his world a little less heavy.

Orchardson's sometimes are the last refinements of colour. Seldom has that been shown more completely than in his "Voltaire"; though I cannot but hold the "Voltaire" to be marred by the rage of its hero, the angry wit and the wronged poet. For who that looks upon the picture can understand it for himself? Here is a company of graceful folk, French nobles of the Eighteenth Century, who have met pleasantly at a pretty banquet—the early dinner that was less intimate than the *souper* of the day—and have got as far as the dessert. That is visible and charming. But what is the place, in the picture's natural story, of the white-faced gentleman who rages at the side, and whom they would desire to soothe or somehow to silence? Even that measure of intelligence upon which an artist, in every art, has a right to count, is unequal to the discovery of such a series of facts as that this white-faced gentleman is Voltaire when he was young, and that Voltaire had been summoned to the street-door below, and when he got there had found it was for nothing better than a flogging, and that having

come upstairs again to his host and his fine companions, he is beseeching them with frantic gesture to take up his cause. All that is very interesting, but who is supposed to interpret it? The subject of the picture halts between true Genre and the old-fashioned painting of History. But the old-fashioned painting of history was concerned, not with some out-of-the-way anecdote, but with incidents known to the world, and presumably recognisable. To History-painting the picture could therefore hardly pretend. But it might have belonged to true Genre, if Voltaire, or his rage, had been omitted. Exquisite it is now, in composition, in style, in grace, in painting. Nobody can write or think of it without being grateful for the high taste, the fine accomplishment. Yet it might have been in its own way perfect, and one of the greatest Genre pictures of recent times, had it sought to illustrate only the manner and the graces of the age, and not the particular story. As it is, it is more nobly painted, but less prudently conceived, than either "A Social Eddy" or "Queen of the Swords." The art is brilliant; the

invention is not wise. It is a great, but yet a faulty chapter in Orchardson's work—the work of a Scotsman who continually reminds us of what Scotland has received from France—in whom is recognised that strain of Gallic grace which from the days of Mary Stuart to our own has sweetened now and again, and twice refined, the strength of Scottish art.

XIX

CHARLES KEENE

CHARLES KEENE began to draw for *Punch* in the year 1850—when he was twenty-seven years old—and he worked for it until within some few months of his death in 1890. It is to be wished that an artist so fertile, so inventive, and so deeply original, had been appreciated more warmly by the generation he served. He had, of course, success; but it was not a success proportioned to the measure of his genius. During at least a quarter of a century, the general public rated as far above him several artists who were less fine observers and less economical draughtsmen—Cruikshank for instance, who, clever as he was, was nothing in comparison with Keene. Since Charles Keene's death, however, there has gone up, from those who know at least, a chorus of praise, the volume of which must have struck with some effect

upon the public ear. Keene never went out of his way to attract attention to himself. In an age of advertising, he remained unadvertised; and, in his art, one was confronted rarely with the caricature that "tells" at once—continually, on the other hand, with the restrained comedy of which the delicate, suggestive humour is durable in its effect.

In saying this I am far, of course, from hinting that Charles Keene's drawing was obscure, or at first unintelligible. It was full, rather, of the simplicity which is the result of the most thoroughly assimilated learning. But over and above its evident drollery there was in it a charm of artistry, slower to be fathomed or exhausted. Week after week the treasures of observation amassed by the artist were poured out upon his drawing-paper; and so what is practically the history of the Lower Middle Class in England came to be written, with as much fulness and with as faultless a penetration as if the historian had been Balzac. It would be absurd to single out for detailed comment any one or two of the sketches of character—of landladies and

cabmen, sportsmen and country doctors, maids of all work and second-rate tavern waiters—for in one sense, as Turner said of his "Liber Studiorum," "What is the use of them but together?" It is as a whole that they display Keene's mind and illustrate his range. Yet, in another sense, each has value. There is not one amongst them that does not satisfactorily attest the presence of this or that great quality—either the artist's genial understanding, or the assured economy of his means, or his amazing sense of movement, or the mental subtlety which gave so wide a range to people professedly of one class, or the significance he could bestow on a London street corner or on a "cabmen's rest," or the delightful expressiveness of his landscape backgrounds. Keene did not follow in his work the changes of costume. Twenty years would pass—there would not be much difference in the shawl or the bonnet. But he followed, from moment to moment, the very subtlest changes in human expression, and, in Art, the passage of time must only confirm his occupation of his eminent place.

XX

PARIS AND FULLEYLOVE

JOHN FULLEYLOVE and Paris have come together—in a series of drawings. It was a conjunction devoutly to be wished for, and if you happen to have in any way promoted it, you may have something of the complacency with which, in general Society, you watch the commerce of two people whom you have introduced fortunately, and who have "got on."

For, bold as it may be to say it, at this late hour of the artistic day, Paris has wanted Mr. Fulleylove; and none the less because he was a stranger and a sojourner, a guest, and not in his home. Too prolonged and certain a familiarity with city or with landscape, breeds in many of us, a dulness, an inertness, a stupidity almost, in respect to them. They are no longer *seen*, if they are not vividly felt. They have become a

conventional background—an effaced background, as it were—to some life of your own, perhaps, of which the interest is all-absorbing; while that which they really wanted was to have a foreground importance, such as belongs to them chiefly in the eye of the unoccupied, or the not preoccupied, stranger.

Who is it that has painted London? De Nittis, perhaps, who came to it—and wondered at it—from France. And who has etched London, if not indeed Whistler?—and he, it may be, best of all in the plates that were wrought by him when the Thames and Rotherhithe, Chelsea and Shadwell, were new to the keen-sighted eyes of his youth.

But another qualification than that of coming to Paris as an interested stranger with a paint-box, was assuredly Fulleylove's, when, after many dealings with Versailles and Hampton Court, Siena, Venice, Oxford, "Petrarch's country," he set his steps towards the "*Ville Lumière*"—settled himself under the shadow of St. Roch, and drew the Paris of the Middle Ages and the Paris of To-day. For Fulleylove, more than many artists one knows,

amongst those who concern themselves best with the aspects and architecture of Cities, is not content on the one hand with record dry and correct, nor on the other with visions vaguely picturesque. His sense of construction is so firm and fair, his grasp of his subjects so energetic and comprehensive, that he is able to take a well-nigh equal pleasure in scenes towards some of which his brethren would turn with delight, and from others of which they would withdraw with indifference or distaste. Paris—any great capital—is more than a city : it is a world ; and it requires a man not of small nature to sympathise with the many phases of its life. By his capacity to accept rather than to reject—to take the modern with the mediæval, and the Paris of Louis the Fifteenth(Voltaire's Paris) with the Paris of the Restoration (Balzac's Paris)—a man unconsciously gives his own intellectual and artistic measure ; and it had often seemed to me that Fulleylove's robustness and tolerance would fit him well to deal with the life and architecture of a place three-fourths of which can but stink in the nostrils of the purist—

its charm and interest lost for ever to the fanatic of Art, the Præ-Raphaelite weakling who prattles of a "bad period." Imagine the Church of St. Sulpice, for instance—those towers of Servandoni's—only one of them Servandoni's perhaps—under which were passed not the least happy days of the youth of Renan—imagine the place gazed at by the baffled eyes of the æsthetic draughtsmen who "think by proxy," and to whom the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, and the later Renaissance itself, are all accursed! To know Paris, you must be charmed by the elegant—not only stirred by the archaic or thrilled by the weird.

Nor must you want the elegant alone, for the place is so much more than a show-place—the holiday haunt of enquiring Englishmen when the House rises for Easter; the happy hunting ground of the Brazilian millionaire. It has its work-a-day aspects: it is itself the expression of all the vivid life and changeful character of such a gifted and such a practical people. "Trade is Art, and Art Philosophy, in Paris," said the writer of *Aurora Leigh*,

and, in that saying, sacrificed no truth to the neatness of the epigram. Above all things, to paint Paris, you must understand and rejoice that Paris is no dead city—no Bruges, no Mantua—no monument of stones, but alive—alive with its Eiffel Tower and its *bateaux mouches*, as much as with its Théatre Français and Visconti's Fountain of Moliere.

Again, to an architectural painter of Fulleylove's particular bent, Paris appeals not so much by the beauty of the occasional detail—the Sainte Chapelle, if the Thirteenth Century is what is wanted, or, if the Nineteenth, Saint Augustin, white and domed, and the "Four Quarters of the Globe" by Carpeaux, high up towards the Observatory—not so much by these does it appeal as by its grace of *ensemble*, its strange unity in all its variety (the tradition of architectural beauty having never been lost), its great vistas, endless perspectives—now the River, now the Luxembourg Gardens stretching out to the Observatoire—its mien, noble and gay; its fascinating way of "composing," grouping itself, like a model exquisite in figure, exquisite in pose.

Paris, it may be noted, is not amazingly full of colour—France is not, generally speaking, in comparison with England. But Paris, like all France, is full of light ; light and space are two of its charms ; and so it must be painted blithely, flexibly as well as firmly. It would reveal hardly one of its secrets to the student of the Middle Age.

I have not felt for my own part, that Mr. Fulleylove—who has been to so many places —has been everywhere with equal success. Happy at Perugia and at Florence, and breathing an almost native air (for, if English, he is essentially Classic) by the Amphitheatre at Arles and the Roman Baths at Nimes, his brilliant and decisive talent was a little too positive, perhaps, for a fitting dream of Venice—I doubt if he was really in sympathy with that slight strain of the fantastic and unreal which, not on moonlit nights alone, nor only in the dark and stealthy gondola, is indescribably a part of Venetian beauty. But Paris, again, suits him : Paris in nearly all the range of it, he can forcibly and vividly, as well as learnedly, express—from the " Devils of

Notre Dame " to the Tuileries Gardens, and from St. Etienne-du-Mont to the wings of the " Moulin."

I wish only that in his Paris work Fulleylove had restrained himself a little less absolutely to the medium of his customary practice. The interest of his Water-Colour is allowed. Even to those who take small note of his virtue of Style or of his simplicity and genuineness of execution, that is at least obvious. But Fulleylove is never really more entirely an artist than he is in his pencil work ; and, in one's mind's eye, one sees with certainty the " collector " of the near Future gloating over a cherished portfolio, of subjects chiefly architectural, and prizing, just as highly as any Prout or any Edridge, the broad and masculine unmannered pencil-drawings of the artist who, with the black and greyish silver of the lead-pencil, has put before us the Jacobean affluence or Georgian dignity of " Jesus," and the arches and pilasters, the stalls and wooden angels, of St. Peter's at Perugia.

But then again, Fulleylove would not be an artist at all, if he did not see to it that

between material and method there was fitting accord. And few there are who will deny that this, and much besides, has been secured, in the Water-Colours which chronicle, with such a range of sympathy, and with so unfailing a charm, much at least of the changeful and vivacious beauty of the Paris of to-day.

XXI

CAMERON

A YOUNG man still, with an important Future almost certainly before him, Mr. D. Y. Cameron has already a more than creditable Past. He is a distinct personality. In a measure—in a limited measure only—he has expressed himself in Painting. In Etching he is more clearly and powerfully revealed. For sixteen years at least he has held the etching needle. His work has won its way gradually—it has won its way as he has himself developed; and I, at least, who, rightly or wrongly, looked on him ten years ago as a man alike of great parts and of many deficiencies, look on him to-day as one of our modern Masters.

Fully two hundred Etchings Cameron has now executed. He is not proud of all of them. He is indeed so very modest in judging some of the things that are his

triumphs, that I a little doubt his reasonableness from time to time, in condemning what he calls his failures. Still, failures he has, and some of them are in circulation, and so are some of his immaturities—they must be taken account of. Fortunately there remain—and of late years especially there have accumulated—a greater number of coppers creditable and distinguished; and amongst these there are a score or so of plates to which, from one cause or another, the name of "masterpiece" cannot in justice be denied.

Knowing now, in some rough fashion, what is the array of Cameron's etched work, and how one tends to classify it in one's mind, the Collector—who knows no doubt already something of the artist's subjects—will enquire, generally, as to the etching's rarity or commonness. The matter must affect him very much. And the answer should be reassuring to him. Scarcely anything of Cameron's can ever be common.

As an incentive to the Collector—as a joy to his human feebleness—I know of nothing more stimulating than this fact. May I irreverently suggest that it is about

as stimulating as the beauty or majesty of the performance. Cold—I have noticed—is the Collector, in presence of the beauty that is upon the street. The prints of Cameron—any particular print, I mean—can belong but to a few. Many may possess themselves of some of his Etchings; because like Helleu, Strang, Legros, like Whistler and Seymour Haden indeed—not to speak of Rembrandt himself—he has produced so many coppers. But there are few collectors who will ever be able to acquire any great mass of his work. The plates, of the good prints as of the bad prints, are nearly all of them destroyed. And destroyed after how many impressions have been taken? Two or three dozen at the most, generally. I do not, at present, go into the reason for this state of things. I neither blame the artist nor commend him for it. I state the fact merely. And these impressions, let it be remembered—these few impressions—like the brilliant work of Mr. Muirhead Bone, issued on the same basis, are scattered over England, Scotland, and America. To form a complete collection of the engraved work of

Cameron up to the present time, has already become not a difficult, but an impossible task—save, it may be, for the happy person who may have begun years ago, at the beginning. But I doubt, really, if there exists such a person. Furthermore, I doubt his supreme "happiness," if he *does* exist. For, if he is happy, he has to be happy with failures as well as successes; with the unripe and the tentative, as well as the decisive and accomplished. No: the complete Engraved Work of Cameron can never, it seems, be in any one man's possession. Nor is there any serious need that it should be. To own an adequate representation of that work—a group of pieces; ten, twenty, even thirty it may be—showing the various range of Cameron's accomplished endeavour, the various facets of his many-sided power and charm, is all we have the right or need to wish for, and is certainly all we shall attain.

And now to the artistic aspects of the matter. These various facets of a great etcher's talent—we will look at them a little.

Cameron is, above all, an Etcher of

Architecture—buildings of nearly every kind appeal to him—they present themselves to him as exercises for his "line,"—yet more, as exercises for his imagination. The spirit of Romance is his, profoundly. To him, a great Past speaks. Yet I know absolutely no architectural Etcher with such a range of sympathy. Old and new interest him almost equally; and in so far as that is so, he differs from Whistler, as he differs from Méryon, both of whom, now in this thing and now in that, he to some slight extent recalls. He likes, genuinely, every sort of building, as a dramatic person in life—the man who ponders on his kind—likes every sort of character. The quay-sides of Greenock interest him; the slums of Stirling and Glasgow. The grouping of thatched cottages round a stumpy-towered church interests him, and the wonderful rhythm of line in which he places, or in which he contrives to surround them. See "A Dutch Village." The highly-decorated interests him. The fairy-like Venetian beauty. The sombre—see the "Loches," one of the most impressive of all his recent performances.

The severe—look at "Siena." The grim and threatening and suggestive—behold, the "Porto del Molo, Genoa," or the wonderful "Newgate" of the London Set; a print which in its decision, firmness, terrible directness, I pit against the "Rue des Mauvais Garçons" of Méryon. And then, the pretty accidents of the Venetian *calle*; light and shadow so delightfully patterned, and texture so fascinating—see the "Venetian Street." But there is enough of this matter—or will be when I have mentioned one other of the Venice pieces, and that is "The Rialto," which wants, perhaps, atmosphere, which wants various planes—which, whether it wants them or not, is at least without them—but which, again, is a success in its way; its way this time a more formal and precise patterning.

It was never very difficult to be interested in Cameron's realistic, yet imaginative vision of Architecture. It took me much longer to in any way appreciate his Landscape; and I suppose because that comparative absence of atmosphere and planes, which one notices in certain of his buildings, is noticed also, and is not always easy to

be reconciled to, in certain of his Landscape pieces. In a few of his Landscape pieces he aims at delicacy, refinement of gradation, transiency of atmospheric effect. But these are quite the exceptions. Generally, he aims at massiveness—the solid structure of the world. The "Ledaig," in the rare early State in which alone I hold it to be desirable, is an instance. Perhaps the "Rembrandt Farm" is another. But a fine impression of "Border Towers"—the plate was wrought as early in Cameron's career as 1894—still represents his high-water mark in Landscape Art. Only, I now discern in many another study in the same department of practice, virtues—and a potent individuality which was not in the first place attractive. Much that we look for in Landscape Etching, Cameron deliberately discards; and we end by recognising that often the expression of it would have been incompatible with the accomplishment of his peculiar, of his very personal, aim.

To close, I would draw the attention of the Collector to the essentially decorative instinct of this artist. It is visible

continually—we have already in a measure considered it. But there are pieces in which one finds it almost unexpectedly pronounced. In a portrait, or a fancy portrait, there is ever with Cameron the idea of a decorative disposition of line. To this, other things are sometimes subordinated. See "Veronica"; prettily quaint, I allow. See again, "A Dutch Maiden." Neither is a study of character. In each the face is but a "motive." See, too, "The Bridge of Sighs"—half fact, half invention. And see, above all things, that frank and admirable decoration—it is decoration and nothing else—the "Title to the Italian Set." As an ornamentist, rich and yet austere, that little plate alone would give to Cameron some claim to be remembered. And other claims he has, and in abundance.

XXII

STILL LIFE

A MINOR cause which does its part, at least, in telling against the satisfactoriness of current Exhibitions, is the extraordinarily small encouragement bestowed upon Still Life and upon Flower-painting; save, indeed, when these proceed from brush or pencil of an acknowledged master: a Vollon, a Fantin, a Francis James. Half-educated persons, whose chief care is that their taste shall have no initiative and no independence—that it shall be, above all, decorously conventional—would permit themselves the regulation ecstasies over the modern realism of the perspiring peasant: Bastien Lepage or Lhermitte; but would think they had betrayed themselves if they confessed to any warm appreciation of unknown artists' painting of Still Life, or had considered the lilies of the field, how they grow.

Again, even with regard to the Masters. "We can have the fruit, the silver goblet, the roses, zinnias, and azaleas—the actual things," they say, "the things themselves, which is better." But they forget that in the picture, wise men have the things—their charm at least—and the Art besides the things—the painter's own great way of looking at and rendering them—a humble truth which I commend to the reflection of those who do not quite understand that in Art that which endures and vivifies is the temperament of the artist.

XXIII

THE ART OF BRABAZON

THE poetry of the art of Mr. Brabazon—which is the poetry of colour and the poetry of atmosphere—has never been more effectively shown than in the long series of Water-Colours and of Pastels which formed a main attraction at the Goupil Gallery so lately as the Autumn of 1905. Brabazon, it is well to recollect, reached fullest maturity — to put it mildly—before ever his work was exhibited at all ; and now that at length the artistic value of his labour is recognised by all who are not only under the spell of ancient schools and time-worn methods, Brabazon is a veteran. In something that must be called old age, he has his reward. He is recognised as one of the last, and one of the noblest, of great sketchers, and, like the man of modern spirit that he is,

it is to Water-Colour and to Pastel that he addresses himself—these are the mediums that he employs to register his impressions. Inspired now by Velasquez, now by Turner, and now much more by Nature herself than by any master who of old time interpreted her, he uses Water-Colour, as he uses Pastel, in the great French way—I am speaking now of the *facture*. He strains neither. He makes each move easily within the limits properly assigned to it. So slight is he sometimes in either medium, so reticent—so busy behind the scenes, so to put it, in eliminating the superfluous—that old-fashioned people to this day pronounce his work as quite unfinished, and regard him as a sketcher only; sometimes even as that mortal of unenviable place and dubious art, the "gifted amateur."

Of course, qualified persons, making their slow progress through the Goupil Gallery, understood and were delighted by Brabazon's economy of means, as much as by the exquisiteness of his vision. How bold he is, and how refined—how flexible; how various. To every theme he comes with

admirable freshness—a happier Tithonus, to whom the gods have granted not only lasting life, but lasting youth. Nothing is more completely characteristic than his Water-Colour of "The Righi, Evening." The tender glow, attained easily, of sunset hues, is of a refinement Turner in his great late days could hardly have surpassed. A sunset effect about San Giorgio, Venice, is of absolute flame. And yet this is a violence of necessary truth, that no sane eye resents. Then there were some delightful little exercises inspired now by Rembrandt, now by Müller or Bonington, now by the greatest Spaniard—reminiscences only; not claiming to be copies, but brilliant, spirited memoranda, done for the man's own pleasure: charged with his personality: done under the influence of an impression as strong as if it had been suggested in the presence of Nature, and not in presence of another artist's art. Among the Pastels—dreams of the South, so full of individuality—were the "Sails, Toulon," and the "Hyères"—this last an instance of deliberate, visible construction, rare enough in Brabazon's work—a work in which

this singularly keen observer of all beautiful things seems concerned mainly, of course, not in building up pictures, but in arresting, and making to endure, the transient vision, the happy moment of his choice.

XXIV

THE PERSONALITY OF WATTS

GREUZE'S "Listener" and his "Shepherdess" are both not only interesting, but even brilliant examples of at least one side of his talent; yet the "Shepherdess" must be considered frankly allegorical, or decorative—it has little reference to life—and the "Listener" has about it this, of objectionable, that it either bestows on woman the needless *naïveté* of the infant, or else tricks out the child in the too quickly-acquired seductiveness of sex. In every Art the personality of the artist dominates the subject of his choice, fixes its treatment, and, in Shakespearean phrase, "shines through" the created thing. How abrupt, therefore —and instructive—in a recent Exhibition, was the transition from the work on which a not exalted mind of the French Eighteenth Century expressed the ideals, such as they are, of average

sensual men, to the work of an artist like our veteran Watts—the veteran of whom we were proudest—who, in all his visions of womanhood, imparted the refinement and the dignity which were his models', but which were also his own. Miss Duff Gordon exhibited a portrait—a Watts comparatively early—of that Lady Waterford—"Louisa, Marchioness"—whose character and charity were yet more remarkable than her imaginative achievements in the Art which Watts practised. And Watts himself was the owner of a full-face portrait of "Lady Lilford," in which more perhaps than even in the "Lady Katherine Thynne," he expressed, as no one else could have expressed for no one else amongst painters could so profoundly feel) the intimate alliance, in our best English types—which make no claim to be "modern," since they are of Race much more than of period—between the highest of refined natures and the most rightly potent of physical charms.

THE END.

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